

## **The Summit of the Future and Options for UN Security Council Reform**

### **08 February 2024, Hyatt Regency Hotel**

#### *A new momentum for reform?*

Various developments in recent years - the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to reverberate to this day, the deepening cost of living and debt crises, the climate emergency, the return of major power rivalry and the geopolitical tension these are stocking and the eruption of new conflicts including Russia's invasion of Ukraine which the UN Security Council was unable to prevent or resolve - have brought the multilateral system to a major crossroads. The pressure from these multiple and intersecting crises aggravating existing flaws of the multilateral system have triggered growing policy interest and debates on the reform of the multilateral system, precipitating various initiatives for reform. The most notable of such initiatives for reform is the UN Secretary-General's proposed convening of the [Summit of the Future](#), scheduled for September 2024.

One of the areas of reform that attracts a lot of interest relates to the global peace and security system. To provide common source of reference for the engagement of member states of the UN in the negotiations on the outcome of the Summit of the Future on this area, the Secretary-General of the UN produced in July 2023 a policy brief titled the [New Agenda for Peace](#).

UN Security Council Reform constitutes a key aspect of the proposed area for reform highlighted in the New Agenda for Peace. This reflects the view of the wider membership of the UN which gained particular impetus in recent years. As the New Agenda for Peace put it, a 'Security Council that is more representative of the geopolitical realities of today, and of the contribution that different parts of the world make to global peace, is urgently needed.' To this end, it proposed that 'urgent progress is made in 'the intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the Security Council to make this body more just and representative.' On its part, the Secretary-General's [High-](#)

[Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism](#) proposed that the Summit of the Future announces a Charter review conference focused on Security Council reform.

Various events have put a spotlight on the UNSC's paralysis and its urgent need for long overdue reform. In the face of widening sources of threats to peace and security and growing instances of complete disregard of international norms in conflicts as witnessed not only in Ukraine but also in such other conflicts as Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia and currently in the raging war in Sudan, the need for such reform is becoming increasingly acute. The imperative for such reform due to the inability of the UNSC to act proactively in situations of concern became apparent when the UN Secretary General took the extraordinary decision to invoke Article 99 of the UN Charter on 6 December 2023 in the context of the war in Gaza.

The quest for UNSC reform is not a new agenda for Africa. In pursuit of this agenda, African states under the auspicious of the African Union adopted in 2005 the Ezuliweni Consensus outlining African position on the reform of the UN. Going further the AU established a high-level body dedicated to Africa's quest for UNSC reform – the Committee of Ten. Africa's demand for reform centres around the expansion of the membership of the UNSC to ensure Africa's representation in the Council. In recommending UNSC reform, the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board in its report stated in a formulation that echoes to Africa's longstanding view that the UNSC 'should be expanded to reflect equitably those regions that are chronically underrepresented, including those with large and growing youth populations, and to ensure that voices from conflict-affected regions are more meaningfully included in the Security Council's decision-making'. Africa's approach finds further expression in the position of the Board that '[o]ptions for allocating seats to regions rather than specific countries, and for extending the tenure of non-permanent seats, should also be explored.'

Africa is not the only region of the world that supports and proposes the reform of the UNSC. At the 78<sup>th</sup> General Assembly General Debates in September, more than 80 UN Member States emphasized the need for UNSC reform.

***Reform is fraught with serious challenges but is not beyond the realm of the possible***

It is clear that the changes in geopolitical conditions of the world and the increasing inadequacy of the global security system to effectively address today's peace and security challenges have made reform very pressing. There is also widespread support for reform of the system, including most notably the reform of the UNSC. While these factors are propitious for the reform agenda, it is not at all clear that there are clearly viable options and pathways that can garner the support of the large majority of UN member states to secure the reform of the UNSC.

Despite increasing pronouncement on the part of large number of states for the reform of the UNSC, there is no indication that the position of states on the 'how' and 'nature' of reform have become more flexible to facilitate greater consensus for effecting the reform. Obviously, this lack of movement from pre-existing relatively fixed positions on the reform of the UNSC on the part of various groups is not something to be blamed on any particular group of states, although some bear more responsibility than others on account of their profile.

It has to be acknowledged that the reform of the UNSC is not an easy undertaking. Despite the increasing interest being expressed from various parts of the world, the reform of the UNSC remains a very challenging undertaking. Any serious effort for achieving meaningful progress in this respect has to be informed by the recognition of the gravity of the challenges for UNSC reform. Yet, any effort at reform that is not premised on the conviction that reform of the UNSC is not impossible despite being difficult is also unlikely to succeed. The approach to reform has therefore to be informed by both a firm sense of realism and that of an optimism that a UNSC reform is not completely beyond the realm of the possible.

Part of the challenge is accordingly to explore the identification of the range of possible options and different pathways that facilitate the achievement of UNSC reform. Having regard to both the increasing interest for UNSC reform and the need for facilitating shifts in approach to UNSC reform that would make reform more likely, Amani `Africa, in partnership with the Embassy of Japan, building on its engagement in the current global policy discussion on the reform of the multilateral system, convenes this a high-level policy forum ahead of the upcoming 37<sup>th</sup> session of the AU Assembly.

In organizing this particular Amani Africa policy dialogue form, we are informed also by the note from the co-facilitators of the negotiation for the Pact of the Future, Namibia and Germany, in the zero draft that they circulated to UN member states that

*It is clear from Member State and stakeholder inputs that reform of the Security Council remains a priority for the Summit of the Future, and we are committed to achieving an ambitious outcome in the Pact for the Future. We will present initial language on this issue in June 2024.*

## **Agenda**

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| 1:00 – 1:45: | Lunch   |
| 1:45 – 2:00: | Registration  |
| 2:00 – 2:10: | Welcoming Remarks by Dr Solomon Dersso, Founding Director, Amani Africa Media and Research Services |

### ***Inaugural Session - Scene setting session***

The seminar consists of an introductory part and three sessions. **The Inaugural Session** will set the tone for the seminar by acknowledging today's increased momentum for SCR against the backdrop of SC's inability to effectively and timely address contemporary challenges faced by the international community. It will touch upon the current state of the discussion on UNSC reform and different proposals submitted by states and groups including African Position (CAP), which is supported by many states and groups including Japan.

#### **Speaker:**

2:10 – 2:25: Reflections by H.E. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the AU and Head of UNOAU

### ***Session I Africa's membership in the reformed UNSC***

Session I will focus on approaches for Africa's representation in a reformed Security Council when dealing with contemporary and future global challenges. Participants will be asked to imagine how the dialogue in the SC would change if SCR happened just today. Participants will reflect on how the SCR, by incorporating more African voices, could more effectively respond to peace and security concerns and address threats to peace and security more consistently and equitably. Through such discussion, the participants will have more refined, clearer perspectives on how an early SCR would directly benefit Africa's interest and position Africa to contribute to the maintenance of global peace and security.

#### **Speakers:**

2:25 – 2:40: Reflections by Dr. Tekeda Alemu, Former State Minister of Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the UN Security Council

2:40 – 2:55: Reflections by H.E. Ambassador Rebecca Amuge Otengo, Permanent Representative of Uganda to the AU

2:55 – 3:40: Discussions

3:40- 3:50: Break

### ***Session II Current state of play and policy negotiations***

In session II, participants will be asked to analyse factors that are hindering the SCR effort delivering actual result and ways to overcome them. What are the issues of reform on which views of many Member States converge? What are the most difficult questions in SCR negotiation where the views diverge widely? Are there avenues and options for bridging the divergent positions of different groupings? What are the important compromises that are needed to achieve common ground for achieving UNSC reform?

#### **Speakers:**

3:50 – 4:00 Video Message by Co-Chairs of Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) on Security Council Reform: H.E. Mr. Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria and H.E. Mr. Tareq M. A. M. Albanai, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait

4:00 – 4:15: Special Remark by H.E. Ambassador SHINO Mitsuko, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN (online)

4:15 – 4:30: Discussions

### ***Session III Different options for UNSC reform***

Session III will focus on overcoming existing challenges and identifying workable options and pathways for UNSC reform. What are the different existing proposals from various states and groupings on the reform of the UNSC? What should be the principles that anchor the reform of the UNSC? What are the range of UNSC reform options? What are the pathways to those various reform options? What platforms and approaches can help advance effective reform process?

**Speakers:**

- 4:30 – 4:45: Reflections by H.E. Ambassador George M. Orina, Ambassador-Designate and Head of Kenyan Mission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- 4:45 – 5:00: Reflections by Dr Solomon Dersso, Founding Director, Amani Africa
- 5:00 – 5:45: Discussions

***Wrap-up Session***

Presenters will summarize the event by discussing how a reformed Security Council can better serve Africa against the backdrop of the challenges in the Council and calling for continued discussion on how African countries can effectively engage in reform discussion going forward.

- 5:45 – 5:55: Wrap-up remarks by Panellists
- 5:55 – 6:00: Closing Remarks by Dr Solomon Dersso