



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. JULIUS
MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE, AT THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMITTEE OF TEN (C-10) AFRICAN HEADS OF
STATE AND GOVERNMENT ON THE REFORM OF
THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
SUMMIT, OYALA, EQUATORIAL GUINEA
- FRIDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER 2023**

Your Excellency Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea;
Excellencies, Colleagues Heads of State and Government;
Your Excellency, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission;
Honourable Ministers of Governments;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;
Good morning.

1. I warmly welcome you to this Summit of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the reform of the United Nations Security Council (the C-10).

2. I deeply appreciate you for taking time out of your busy schedules to attend this important Summit. I also commend your efforts over the years in the pursuit of our mandate.

3. At the outset, let me thank Your Excellency President Teodoro Obiang NGUEMA MBASAGO for kindly consenting to host this Summit in this beautiful city of Oyala.

4. Let me also thank you, colleagues Heads of State and Government, for your concerted efforts over the years to promote, canvass and advance the Common African Position to the point of it being the most viable option in the UN Security Council reform process.

5. The purpose of this Summit is to take stock of the progress made in terms of delivering on the core mandate of the Committee in so far as canvassing support for the Common Africa Position.

6. We will then decide on strategies to strengthen the support already received from other interest groups in the reform process whilst finding pathways to engage with those groupings with strongly divergent views from the Common Africa Position.

7. Our meeting here today further gives us the opportunity to reaffirm our full commitment to the Common African Position and offer the necessary guidance to our relevant officials to enhance their engagement in the UN Security Council reform process.

8. Our Ministers met in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, in January 2023 and made several recommendations for our consideration. The recommendations included preparing for “enhanced engagement” in the intergovernmental negotiations framework on the Security Council reform (IGN) process, guided by the 2015 Framework Document, in a bid to move the IGN process forward.

9. This was recommended in our 23rd Report to the African Union Assembly in February this year, and it was included in the decision of the Assembly.

10. In our meeting today, we need to reiterate the need for enhanced engagement in the reform process and provide further guidance on the remits of such enhanced engagement.

11. The current iteration of the Revised Co-Chairs Elements Paper dated 2nd June 2023 states that: “There is a wider recognition and broader support by Member States for the legitimate aspiration of the African countries to play their rightful role on the global stage, including through an increased presence in the Security Council, as reflected in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration adopted by the African Union in 2005. Redressing the historical injustice against Africa is viewed as a priority, and several delegations emphasised that Africa should be treated as a special case.”

12. In this light, we need to be prepared for a further upsurge in momentum to redress the historical injustice done to Africa.

13. What is this historical injustice? By reason of colonialism and its vestiges, Africa is not being represented in the Permanent Category and is grossly underrepresented in the Non-Permanent Category of the UN Security Council.

14. In this regard, enhanced engagement could mean to properly situate ourselves to take advantage of any opportunity that may arise from the efforts of the IGN Co-Chairs, Member States, and Interest Groups.

15. For instance, to either develop a holistic plan for the reform of the UN Security Council or advocate for the treatment of Africa as a special case and be prioritised.

16. The issue of Text-Based Negotiations remains one of the critical procedural questions to be addressed in the ongoing Intergovernmental Negotiations at the UN General Assembly.

17. The issue is a contentious one, and there is no consensus on the commencement of Text-Based Negotiations, even within the African Group. We should, however, consider guiding our Permanent Representatives on this issue going forward.

18. In our consideration of the Text-Based Negotiation issue, one main concern of note is the unity of the African Union Member States. I am of the strongest conviction that we should strive to maintain solidarity with the Common African Position as this is our main strength in advancing our collective interest in the reform of the UN Security Council.

19. The P-5 is key to the reform process, and engagement with them will provide an opportunity for a breakthrough in the seeming deadlock in the IGN process.

20. It will be a challenging task, but it is an opportunity we cannot afford to ignore. I reported to the AU Assembly in February this year that I had fruitful discussions with President Biden of the United States on the margins of the Africa-US Summit in December last year on UN Security Council Reform, and he promised to lead in developing a plan for the eventual reform of the Council.

21. As a follow-up to my discussion with the US President, the C-10 Ambassadors in New York had very fruitful and constructive discussions with the US Ambassador to the United Nations, in which she revealed she had been tasked to consult with all Interest Groups and Key Member States with a view to developing a viable reform plan for presentation to Member States. This is why we, as C-10 Heads of State and Government, must engage all P-5 Members to build on ongoing efforts.

22. In this regard, I will firstly propose that we task our officials to come up with an engagement plan and aide memoire to assist our engagements with the P-5 Members.

23. Secondly, I am pleased to inform you that I have tasked my Mission in New York to use the Sierra Leone Presidency of the UN Security Council in August 2024 to hold a high-level event, one of our signature events, on the reform of the UN Security Council and the imperative to address the historical injustice done to Africa.

24. The event will offer an unparalleled opportunity for Africa to speak with one voice, calling for us to be treated as a special case and prioritised. Sierra Leone will be greatly honoured by your participation in this important signature event.

EXCELLENCIES,

25. The Co-Chairs of the 78th session of the IGN have proposed three elements to guide the IGN process. These include negotiations to reinforce and build convergences, structured dialogue on models of reform proposed by Member States and Groups, and Contributions for the Summit of the Future.

26. On the element of building convergences, our current mandate demands that we safeguard the integrity of the Common African Position. Africa's position, therefore, is unequivocal: we demand two seats in the Permanent Category of the UN Security Council and an additional two seats in the Non-Permanent Category, bringing the total of Non-Permanent seats to five. The African Union will choose the African Permanent Members.

27. On the Veto, Africa wants it to be abolished. If, however, Member States wish to retain the Veto, it must be extended to all new Permanent Members.

28. The Common African Position also reflects our best model to rectify the historical injustice done to Africa. In view of the directives requested by our Ambassadors in New York, we will have to consider whether we wish to provide views at this stage on the overall model for reforms and expressed views on positions of other Interest Groups and Member States.

29. Regarding the United Nations Summit of the Future in September 2024, allow me to first congratulate and commend Namibia and Zambia on their important co-facilitating roles in the Summit for the Future.

30. In relation to the IGN Co-Chairs' proposed input from the UN Security Council reform process, our aim should be to have an unequivocal message of addressing the non-representation of

Africa in the Permanent Category and gross underrepresentation in the Non-Permanent Category of the UN Security Council.

31. In effect, we should make the clarion call for Africa to be treated as a priority and special case in the reform process. I trust you will share your views on this critical point during your interventions.

32. In closing, at the end of our deliberations today, we have an Outcome Document that we will adopt. The Outcome Document includes sections on the assessment of the state of the Common African Position, the IGN process, including the present state of affairs, key issues, recommendations, and plan of action.

33. The draft Outcome Document serves as a guide with clear analysis and conclusions for our consideration and ultimate decision-making.

34. I am convinced that the most important thing for Africa in the reform process is to maintain the integrity of the Common African Position.

35. Let me therefore implore you, Colleagues Heads of State and Government, to remain cohesive and let us continue to speak with one voice in unity of purpose on all aspects of the reform process. This we must do until the demands of the Common African Position are achieved.

36. Let me take this opportunity to thank Your Excellency Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, once again for hosting this C-10 Summit.

37. My sincere thanks to Your Excellency Abdelmadjid Tebboune, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, for consenting to host the next C-10 Ministerial meeting. These meetings will give us further opportunities to chart the way

forward and hopefully serve as a platform to fully prepare the C-10 for every future eventuality in the IGN Process.

38. I thank you for your kind attention, and I wish us all fruitful deliberations.