UN Security Council reform and Strengthening UNGA authority

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Greetings from the cold Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan.

Can anyone deny how important global peace and security is? The total proposals/submissions under the Peace and Security theme, which is continuously pouring in, is outnumbering compared to the other thematic areas. This just show how critical and strategic the theme is, without discounting the interconnectedness with other six themes. Several fascinating submissions, some of which are particularly striking and seemingly doable are proposals relating to the establishment of United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS), early warning portal, making the UNGA resolutions binding and UN Force. However, reflecting on our online forum on the 16th February seem to suggest continuing paralysis caused by sustained respective nation's interest and more so by the UN Security Council.

World powers with potential to sustain the path of development globally are at helm of failing global peace, security, health and environmental discourses and distorting development. Similarly, the very countries entrusted with special veto powers by the UN with the prime responsibility to promote international peace, stability and security are embroiled in wars indirectly or directly. These are clear evidences of failing global governance system vis-à-vis the UN. The purposes and principles on which the UN was founded seven decades ago still has significance and relevance. And undeniably for times to come. However, system that must change with time are '**governing structures and its operations**' to stay fit-for- purpose and provide effective and efficient responses to existing and emerging challenges. In particular, the existing UN Security Council (UNSC) arrangement (veto right) which is crippling and facing criticism globally. This prerogative is perceived both amongst elected UNSC members and other UN member states as a tool by the permanent five UNSC members to heighten their foreign policy. For example – what does the continuing war in Ukraine mean despite an overwhelming support to end the war, both at the UNGA and the Security Council?

Several attempts were made to remodel Security Council and veto power structures, notably Annan model, African proposal, Blue model, Green model, Small Five (S5) model, etc. All models suggested an increase in permanent membership and veto right expansion, which may further amplify challenges. On the contrary, an ideal option could be a complete elimination of veto structure as proposed by Prof. Vesselin Popovski's. However, considering the failure of the League of Nations and historical origination of veto for US to be part of such a global congregation, realizing this could be challenging.

Despite such challenges, the social, environmental and economic transformation and progression the world has seen over the last several decades is decently acknowledgeable. The UN with its convening authority along with its partners at macro, meso and micro levels including the civil society organizations are continuing to deliver its mandates. Therefore, any attempts to remodel global governance should garner towards further strengthening the existing UN system considering its institutional establishment, global footprint and required maturity than devising a new or parallel governance model.

1. **Restructuring regional member countries**: UN regional groupings (in 1966, 2014) have evolved over period to realign post decolonisation and address emerging issues. The African group with (54) countries, followed by 2. Asia-Pacific (53), 3. Eastern Europe (EEG) (23), 4. Latin America and Caribbean (GRULAC) (33) and 5. Western Europe and other (WEOG) (28). The African Group with

28% representation at the UNGA is the highest, followed by Asia-Pacific with 27.5%, GRULAC 17%, WEOG 15%, and EEG 12%.

None of these restructuring have been significant enough both in terms of geographic representation particularly in decision making. The proposal seeks to redistribute member countries almost equally amongst regional groups based on geographic location, ethnicity, religion and other factors, with a maximum of 40 countries and a minimum of 37 countries in each regional group setting. The difference in representation amongst proposed regional groups will be only 2%, contrary to the existing variation of 16%.

The proposed change could optimize the functioning of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and justifies the establishment of regional chapter of UNSC

Table 1: United Nations Member countries – existing Regional group distribution and representation at various UN councils.

Regional Group	Number of members	% Rep1	UNSC (Security Council) permanent members	% Rep2	UNSC elected members	% Rep3	ECOSOC (Economic and Social) members	% Rep4	HRC (Human Rights) members	% Rep5
Africa Group	54	28	0	0	3	30	14	26	13	28
Asia-Pacific Group	53	27.5	1	20	2	20	11	20	13	28
EEG(Eastern European Group)	23	12	1	20	1	10	6	11	6	13
GRULAC (Latin America and Caribbean Group)	33	17	0	0	2	20	10	19	8	17
WEOG (Western European and Other group)	29	15	3	60	2	20	13	24	7	14
None	1	0.5	-	-	-		-		-	
Total UN members	193	100	5	100	10	100	54	100	47	100

*Table 2: United Nations Member countries – **proposed** Regional group distribution and representation at various UN councils.*

Regional Group	Number of members	% Rep.1	UNSC (Security Council) Regional Chair	% Rep.2	UNSC elected members	% Rep.3	ECOSOC (Social and Economic)	% Rep.4	% Rep.5
			Permanent membership (Veto: price tag for 5 years) or elected parmanent members (rotation every 5 years)		Elected every 2 years rotation		Elected every two members		One of five organs of the UN are relocated in each region
Americas, Caribbean, Australia - New Zealand Group	40	21	1	20.0	2	20.0	11	20.0	1
Africa Group	39	20	1	20.0	2	20.0	11	20.0	1
Middle East and North Africa Group	37	19	1	20.0	2	20.0	11	20.0	1
European Group	40	21	1	20.0	2	20.0	11	20.0	1
Asia Group	37	19	1	20.0	2	20.0	11	20.0	1
Total UN members	193	100	5	100.0	10	100.0	55	100	
Note 1: UNSC Regional Chair can be either elected or can bid for the post. Parmanant status for 5 years. Elected or renew bid every 5 years.									
Note 2: The six governing structures are 1) The General Assembly, 2) The Security Council, 3) The Economic and Social Council, 4) Trustee Council, 5) International Court of Justice and 6) The UN-Secretariat. Proposal is to distribute one headquarters in each region minus the Trustee Council. But will meet whenever required as it is now.									
Note 3: Proposal to establish Regional Security Council similar to existing Regional Economic and Social Council headquarters, in each region.									

2. **Renewable five-year permanent membership with or without power of veto:** An ideal situation to optimise democratic system of governance is doing away with the most undemocratic system of 'permanent membership' and their 'veto right'. However, considering reasons that led to **failure of League of Nations, a flexible renewable five-year permanent membership with or without power of veto is being proposed. One member per region could be elected as five-year permanent member to the UNSC. An alternate option could be an open bidding in each region, after a minimum bid threshold for a permanent seat is decided by the UN secretariat collectively based on budgetary** requirements for UN operations, including capping on the use of veto.

   Unlike the permanent membership, two non-permanent members per region to the UNSC could be elected for every 2 years. Similar, arrangements are proposed for UN ECOSOC and other establishments.

3. **Establishment of a Regional Peace and Security Council**: The proposal further proposes to establish Regional Peace and Security Council where regional peace and security concerns are first deliberated and addressed at regional UNSC meetings. Regionally failed matters could then be scaled to Global UNSC meeting. Unresolved matters both at regional and global UNSC meetings could then be followed hrough two-tiered UNGA - Annual UNGA and specially convened UNGA. The Special UNGA could mandate presence of Head of States, every 2nd year and enabling all its resolutions to be final and binding.

4. **UNGA resolutions final and finding**: UNGA being central to governing structures and by virtue of being 'whole' should be able to exercise any decision by majority that deem fit its purposes and principles, should it mean overriding a council or veto. Proposed processes and establishments are expected to enhance decision effectiveness and significance. Therefore, extend full support to Kerstin Leitner's proposal to make UNGA resolutions binding and Georgios Kostakos's proposal of transferring veto- blocked Security Council items to UNGA and use of UN Charter Article 99.

5. **Appointment to key UN positions**: A three-tiered selection process to key positions within the UN (e.g.: UN SG) is proposed. 1. Country level nomination/ election of a candidate for a position. 2) Followed by regional group debate and voting. Candidate that secures maximum votes per region participate at global scale. 3) Final candidates' debate globally and hold the final elections coinciding with UNGA.

Annexure 1: Proposed member states distribution

PLAN-5: Regions and Member countries

1 Americas, Caribbean, Australia - New Zealand Group	2 Africa Group	3 Middle East and North Africa Group	4 European Group	5 Asia Group
Countries	**Countries**	**Countries**	**Countries**	**Countries**
1 Antigua and Barbuda	1 Angola	1 Algeria	1 Albania	1 Afganistan
2 Bahamas	2 Benin	2 Armenia	2 Andorra	2 Bangladesh
3 Barbados	3 Botswana	3 Azerbaijan	3 Austria	3 Bhutan
4 Belize	4 Burkina Faso	4 Bahrain	4 Belarus	4 Brunei Darussalam
5 Canada	5 Burundi	5 Chad	5 Bosnia and Herzegovin	5 Cambodia
6 Costa Rica	6 Cabo Verde	6 Djibouti	6 Bulgaria	6 China
7 Cuba	7 Cameroon	7 Egypt	7 Belgium	7 Cyprus
8 Dominica	8 Central African Republic	8 Eritrea	8 Croatia	8 Fiji
9 Dominican Republic	9 Comoros	9 Ethiopia	9 Czech Republic	9 India
10 El Salvador	10 Congo	10 Georgia	10 Denmark	10 Indonesia
11 Grenada	11 Côte d'Ivoire	11 Iran (Islamic Republic of)	11 Estonia	11 Japan
12 Guatemala	12 Democratic Republic of the Congo	12 Iraq	12 Finland	12 Lao People's Democratic Repu
13 Haiti	13 Equatorial Guinea	13 Israel	13 France	13 Malaysia
14 Honduras	14 Gabon	14 Jordan	14 Germany	14 Maldives
15 Iceland	15 Gambia	15 Kazakhstan	15 Greece	15 Marshall Islands
16 Ireland	16 Ghana	16 Kuwait	16 Hungary	16 Micronesia (Federated States o
17 Jamaica	17 Guinea	17 Kyrgyzstan	17 Italy	17 Mongolia
18 Mexico	18 Guinea-Bissau	18 Lebanon	18 Latvia	18 Myanmar
19 Nicaragua	19 Kenya	19 Libya	19 Lithuania	19 Nauru
20 Panama	20 Lesotho	20 Mauritania	20 Liechtenstein	20 Nepal
21 Saint Kitts and Nevis	21 Liberia	21 Mali	21 Luxembourg	21 North Korea
22 Saint Lucia	22 Madagascar	22 Morocco	22 Malta	22 Palau
23 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	23 Malawi	23 Niger	23 Monaco	23 Papua New Guinea
24 Trinidad and Tobago	24 Mauritius	24 Oman	24 Moldova	24 Pakistan
25 United Kingdom	25 Mozambique	25 Qatar	25 Montenegro	25 Philippines
26 United States	26 Namibia	26 Saudi Arabia	26 Netherlands	26 Samoa
27 Australia	27 Nigeria	27 Somalia	27 Norway	27 Singapore
28 Argentina	28 Rwanda	28 South Sudan	28 Portugal	28 Solomon Islands
29 Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	29 São Tomé and Príncipe	29 Sudan	29 Poland	29 South Korea
30 Brazil	30 Senegal	30 Syrian Arab Republic	30 Romania	30 Sri Lanka
31 Chile	31 Seychelles	31 Tajikistan	31 Russia	31 Thailand
32 Colombia	32 Sierra Leone	32 Turkmenistan	32 Republic of Macedonia	32 Timor-Leste
33 Ecuador	33 South Africa	33 Tunisia	33 Serbia	33 Tonga
34 Guyana	34 Swaziland	34 Turkey	34 Slovakia	34 Tuvalu
35 New Zealand	35 Togo	35 United Arab Emirates	35 Slovenia	36 Vanuatu
36 Paraguay	36 Uganda	36 Uzbekistan	36 San Marino	37 Viet Nam
37 Peru	37 United Republic of Tanzania	37 Yemen	37 Spain	
38 Suriname	38 Zambia		38 Sweden	
39 Uruguay	39 Zimbabwe		39 Switzerland	
40 Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)			40 Ukraine	