

# Joint Nordic Statement at the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) 9-10 March 2023

Who H.E. Martin Bille Hermann

When 09.03.2023

Excellences, Co-Chairs,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

Let me first thank the co-Chairs for their steady and able leadership of this year's IGN process and their commitment to supporting Member States in making meaningful progress toward comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council. In this regard, the Nordic countries welcome the letter from the co-Chairs dated 3 March 2023, in which they recommend (1) to webcast the first segment of each of the IGN meetings dedicated to prepared statements; and (2) to establish an online repository of the recordings of these webcasts, as well as of other IGN related documents, including the statements delivered by Member States. We commend the Co-Chairs for taking this step forward.

As referenced in the letter, these initiatives are of specific importance to smaller Permanent Missions, such as ours – and the majority of the delegations present here today – who struggle to follow the numerous parallel UN processes. We are confident that recordings, webcasts and more systematic record keeping will allow smaller delegations to engage more meaningfully and thus allow for a more inclusive debate.

Webcasting will also give a greater opportunity for civil society to follow and engage on the issues we are discussing, which we believe will greatly benefit the process.

Co-Chairs,

In today's session you have asked us to reflect on the two clusters related to (1) the size of an enlarged Security Council and the working methods of the Council, and (2) the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The Nordic countries support a balanced expansion of the Security Council. The aim must be to better reflect current global political and economic realities, and ensure increased representation, including both permanent and non-permanent seats for Africa. In our view, it is also important that we continue to look at opportunities for small States to participate meaningfully in the decision-making process of the Security Council as elected members.

In this regard, we recognize the continuous efforts of the Council towards improving its working methods, and that this work must continue. First, efforts to ensure the full participation of all members of the Security Council in its work – with a particular emphasis on elected members. Second, to ensure greater transparency for and inclusion of non-Council members in the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies.

Important innovations include – but are not limited to – earlier involvement of incoming members in the Council’s work; openness to co-penholdership by elected members; the use of a variety of meeting formats; the inclusion of regionally representative briefers, as well as greater involvement, cooperation and coordination with specially affected Member States. We need to talk *with* affected countries, not just *about* them.

These all constitute meaningful examples of reform that do not require a revision of the UN Charter. Rather, this work is already being undertaken in the Council itself through the Informal Working Group (IWG), as well as through the GA revitalization process, responding to calls from the broader membership. This constitutes a strong foundation for future reforms.

At the same time, an enlarged Council will need to further reform its working methods. In this regard, there will be a need to more systematically implement and institutionalize current initiatives; to continuously review, update and improve them; and simultaneously continue to innovate to find complementary modalities to ensure a truly transparent, efficient, effective and accountable functioning of the Council to accommodate its increased membership.

The question of the future of the veto – which we discussed in our last meeting – is of course also a critical piece in this puzzle.

Depending on the ultimate size of an enlarged Council, there may also be a need to revise the existing rotation rule of the Council Presidency, in order to ensure that all elected members have the opportunity to hold the Presidency at least once during their tenure.

These reforms are of course closely related to the topic of the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as we consider how to more systematically and meaningfully increase the transparency, inclusiveness and accountability of the Council's work for the broader UN membership.

In this respect, we can draw inspiration from the successful model of the veto initiative adopted last year, which constitutes an important step towards enhancing the relationship and accountability of the Council to the General Assembly.

Co-Chairs,

We stand ready to contribute to a constructive and interactive dialogue during the meetings today and tomorrow. We also look forward to engaging in more in-depth and frank conversations on these questions, and how they relate to other clusters of the IGN process, as needed including within the format of the “unformals”.

Thank you.