

Gabon the institutions entrusted with implementing those principles.

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Gabon welcomes and supports the initiative for significant reform within the United Nations system.

There is no contradiction between holding a deep commitment to the UN's founding principles, and being a forceful advocate for change in the institutions entrusted with implementing those principles. Indeed, a commitment to those founding principles is itself a major argument for reform, especially in relation to those procedures and institutions that have regrettably shown themselves not adequate to their tasks. Any approach to UN reform must recognize the integrated nature of the UN system as a whole. At the same time, no single issue can take precedence or hold reform on other tracks hostage. Security Council reform, in particular, has attracted considerable attention and is clearly overdue. However a single issue, however important, cannot be allowed to over shadow other areas in which immediate and concrete change is urgently required. Gabon is a country which believes deeply in the founding principles of the United Nations.

But it is also a country that has been disadvantaged by some of the UN's shortcomings. The discriminatory attitude to developing countries in many parts of the UN system is an anomaly needing urgent attention in its own right, but also a symptom of wider failings in the system. Only if the UN is able to address fairly the disadvantaged minorities within its own walls, does it stand any chance of advancing the needs of such groups in the world at large. A significant test of the effectiveness of any process of reform, therefore, must be the extent to which the United Nations genuinely becomes an organization of all its members.

For these reasons Gabon has a sincere and profound interest in the success of the reform initiative, and is keen to work together with member states to achieve real results, both to restore and bolster the credibility of institution and to bring real benefit to the citizens of member states. UNSC Reform The question of the reform of the UNSC is as old as the UN itself. Member States have consistently voiced concerns over permanent representation on the Council and the power of the veto, by which point global geopolitical realities had clearly shifted since 1945. Discussion about reforming the UN Security Council began with the 1993 establishment of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. After more than a decade of the Working Group, Member States decided in September 2007 to move discussions to an Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process. The delegation of Gabon echoes the decision 62/557 of 2008, which laid out the parameters of the IGN, the five key issues under consideration in these negotiations are: 1) categories of membership to the Council (i. e. permanent, non-permanent, or a third option), 2) the question of the veto, 3) regional representation, 4) size of an enlarged council and working methods, and 5) the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

Gabon sternly believes it is vital to ensure that multilateralism guaranteed collective security and inclusion. Africa represents the largest geographic group at the United Nations and issues relating to the continent remain the bulk of the Council's agenda. Any future Security Council reform must ensure

that Africa has a permanent seat. That is part and parcel of the aspirations for genuine democracy of global political and economic governance.

Gabon's and the African Common Position stand to enlarge the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, improve on its working methods and accord the new permanent members the same prerogatives and privileges as those of the current permanent members, including the right to veto.

Gabon believes that an equitable representation mandates the increase in the Security Council's membership from fifteen to twenty-six with the eleven additional seats to be distributed as follows where two permanent seats and two (additional) non-permanent seats are for African States, two permanent seats and one non-permanent seat is for Asian States, one non-permanent seat is for Eastern European States, one permanent seat and one non-permanent seat is for Latin American and Caribbean States, and one permanent seat is for Western European and other States. We would like the special committee to evaluate the ways the veto is being used to obstruct action against threats to international peace and security, and the instruments available, such as Uniting for Peace with extended authorization, to circumvent this blockade created in the council by political motivations. The lack of representation at the Council is a cancer that eats away at every institution within the UN system. Power is shifting, but not in the Security Council, where the victors of a war fought 70 years ago determine every important decision. We cannot let this effort at reform fall foul of power politics.

UN Peacekeeping The volatile and challenging atmosphere surrounding peace operations on the continent creates the need for greater cooperation between the United Nations and regional mechanisms. Deployment of the 15 existing peacekeeping missions in the internationally community mandated under chapters VI-VIII of the United Nations Charter has fallen short on metrics of effectiveness and human rights protection. The effectiveness has been compromised by the lack of finance mechanisms, targeted mandates, co-ordination between parallel actors and the ill-training of the blue helmets. These soldiers have also been found perpetrating heinous acts of human rights violations, primarily, sexual abuses. These have become systemic due a lack of monitoring mechanisms for UN peacekeeping operations. Gabon, with its capacity, has been an avid contributor to peacekeeping operations such as MINUSCA mandated to protect civilians and support transition processes in the Central African Republic.

The Security Council authorized on 10 April 2014 deployed this- with the protection of civilians as its utmost priority. Its other initial tasks included support for the transition process; facilitating humanitarian assistance; promotion and protection of human rights; support for justice and the rule of law; and disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation (DDR) processes. The Central African Republic Peacekeeping regime is evident is necessary to maintain sustained interaction between the UN and the Regional Organizations in order to build particularly the operational capacities of the organizations. To this end, the UN, the developed countries and the other regional groupings, should continue to give logistic and financial support to

the speeding up of the establishment of an African Standby Force. The focus on peacekeeping must also stress the element of multidimensional missions involving conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict peacebuilding to prevent relapse of conflict. There is need to promote closer cooperation and coordination between the General Assembly, the Security Council, ECOSOC, the major Funds and Programmes, the UN Specialised Agencies, the Member States and the Regional Organisations throughout the cycle of the conflict. Gabon suggests the use of de-confliction arrangements to ensure coordination of parallel actors in a region. This would guarantee a harmonious transition from conflict management to long-term reconstruction until the danger of instability or the threat of resumption of the conflict has diminished.

It is important to lay down clear rules for the deployment of UN peacekeeping operations to avoid arbitrary use of the right of veto that may delay or obstruct such deployment when the need for deploying peacekeeping forces arises. Jus Cogens, peremptory norms that protect the veil of international peace and security, must always be the test for the legality and effectiveness of such missions. The United Nations and Human Rights The protection of civilians against human rights violations is one of the five fundamental pillars of the protection of civilians in armed conflict, whereby we strive to improve the situation on the ground and to enforce international law. The multidimensional task of protecting civilians encompasses all of the Security Council's areas of jurisdiction. Gabon is party to the various treaties and conventions on human rights law and humanitarian law and we believe that

responsibility for the protection of civilians, both in peacetime and in armed conflict, falls primarily to States themselves.

Gabon, once the most stable and barely discussed nations in Africa, is now front and center in all global news outlets and teetering on the edge of civil war. While we commend the readiness of the AU, with the support of the countries of the region and partners concerned, to assist the parties in Gabon in their search for a rapid settlement to the post-election situation that prevails in their country, for far too long have countries interfered in internal jurisdictions as if its backyard. In times of armed conflict, all parties, including non-State armed groups, have the obligation to protect civilian populations. In our view, every indiscriminate attack against civilians in the a conflict constitutes a violation of human rights and international humanitarian law.

When all parties to an armed conflict neglect to protect civilians, then it falls to the Security Council and the international community to fill the gap in a systematic way through relevant dialogue and consultations. Since the General Assembly and the Security Council are often far from the scenes of conflicts and may not be in a position to undertake effectively a proper appreciation of the nature and development of conflict situations, it is imperative that Regional Organisations, in areas of proximity to conflicts, are empowered to take actions in this regard. The African Union agrees with the Panel that the intervention of Regional Organisations should be with the approval of the Security Council; although such approval could be granted in circumstances requiring urgent action.

In such cases, the UN should assume responsibility for financing such operations. We can be proud of the important normative framework that the Council and the international community have developed over the past decade around the responsibility of States in protecting civilians, especially through resolutions 1674 (2006), 1888 (2009), 1894 (2009), 1906 (2009), 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011). However it must be said that, despite those efforts on the part of the Security Council and the international community, civilian populations continue to suffer attacks in armed conflict. Given that reality, what is at stake for the Council is to use all means to make our normative framework more effective at preventing violence and to bring to justice those who violate human rights.

In that context, we must also give equal focus both to essential political action on the underlying causes of conflict and to promoting and enforcing the rule of law. We must just as diligently pursue efforts to put an end to impunity for those guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide against civilian populations. Doing everything possible to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes are arrested and tried has more than a deterrent function. It is also a matter of enacting justice for the victims. The international community has at its disposal various mechanisms by which to conduct independent, reliable fact-finding investigations. The Council's experience in Darfur, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire has been a rich learning experience and suggests new means to fight impunity. In that context, States stand to gain from taking greater advantage of the expertise of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission. We must also

note the important work of international criminal tribunals, mixed tribunals and traditional justice mechanisms, the admirable work of the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in facilitating fact-finding in various crises, the significant contributions of peacekeeping missions in gathering information on grave violations, especially those against women and children. The delegation of Gabon stands with the metric of consent and impartiality when it comes to military interventions; consent upheld by recognizing the legitimate collective agency of a local government and impartiality upheld by only allowing UNSC sanctioned intervention under chapter VI, VII and VIII of the UN Charter.

Moreover, human rights violations in such actions against acts of aggression against international peace and security are now growing prevalent. A compromise on jus Cogens such as the non-degradable right to life and right to health such as that in Libya or Iraq render such interventions questionable. Gabon calls for monitoring mechanisms like the use of reports by neutral external bodies such as the Amnesty International to evaluate the spillovers of such interventions on human rights. UN Financing The United Nations and all its agencies and funds spend about \$30 billion each year, or about \$4 for each of the world's inhabitants. Yet for nearly two decades, the UN has faced financial difficulties and it has been forced to cut back on important programs in all areas, even as new mandates have arisen. Many member states have not paid their full dues and have cut their donations to the UN's voluntary funds. As of December 31, 2010, members' arrears to the Regular Budget topped \$348 million, of which the US owed 80%.

Many proposals for UN reform call for better budgeting, better financial oversight and more efficient use of funds. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly wrestles with the different priorities of member states and clashes over the level of dues that members must pay. Some reformers suggest that the UN should seek Alternative Financing (not just dues and voluntary contributions) to fund its programs. A global tax on currency or financial transactions, a carbon tax or taxes on the arms-trade might provide such revenue.

But states are jealous of their taxing powers and not keen to transfer such authority to the UN. Dues from member states have supported the United Nations since its founding. But increasingly in recent years, states have failed to pay. At the same time, states have been contributing less to UN voluntary agencies and multilateral aid programs. All across the board, the funding system based on nation states has been unraveling, due in part to declining national finances under neoliberal reforms. Since 1994, discussions on this subject have drawn increasing interest and support, although the obstinacy of the US has blocked all discussion in inter-governmental fora.

Alternative financing schemes such as global taxes to improve the UN financial situation and their dual role as policy instruments and as revenue sources for international programs and institutions must be evaluated by the committee to look for consensus amongst countries with significant spending that could be a subject of such taxation. Gabon believes in the use of country-based pooled funds (CBPFs) managed by OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) whereby donors pool their contributions into single,

unearmarked funds to support local humanitarian efforts. Established when a new emergency occurs or when an existing crisis deteriorates, these funds support the highest-priority projects of the best-placed responders (including international and national NGOs and UN agencies) through an inclusive and transparent process that supports priorities set out in Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs). Crisis Management involves back-up fund to draw on. We suggest the instrumentality of The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), UN's global emergency response fund to deliver funding quickly to humanitarian responders and bring greater balance to emergency assistance. Since 2006, donors to CERF have provided over US\$5 billion worth of life-saving assistance to 100 countries and territories.