



# SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT

## SPECIAL RESEARCH REPORT



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## SECURITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2011

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### 1. Introduction

Elections for the Security Council are set to be held by the 66th session of the UN General Assembly on 13 October. Five of the ten non-permanent seats on the Council will be filled for the 2012-2013 term.

The five seats available for election in 2011 will be distributed regionally as follows:

- two seats for the Africa Group (currently held by Gabon and Nigeria);
- one seat for Asia (currently held by Lebanon);
- one seat for Eastern Europe (currently held by Bosnia and Herzegovina); and
- one seat for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States or GRULAC (currently held by Brazil).

The five new members elected this year will take up their seats on 1 January 2012 and will serve on the Security Council until 31 December 2013.

The procedures governing elections to the Security Council are set out in detail in Annex 1. At press time, it appears that only one of the candidates will enjoy a “clean slate” election. Guatemala is the only candidate for the GRULAC seat. Although a founding member of the UN it has never been a Council member.

In contrast, it appears that the three other races may be contested (Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe).

Africa has three candidates for the two available seats: Mauritania, Morocco and Togo. One of the two available Africa seats is designated as the “Arab swing seat”; Mauritania and Morocco are competing against each other for this seat. (The Arab swing seat alternates every two years between the Asian and the African groups.) Togo, which has been endorsed by the Africa group, is therefore in effect running on a “clean slate” for the other available Africa seat.

- Mauritania (admitted to the UN on 27 October 1961) has served one term on the Council (1974-1975);
- Morocco (admitted to the UN on 12 November 1956) has served two terms on the Council (1963-1964, 1992-1993); and
- Togo (admitted to the UN on 20 September 1960) has served one term on the Council (1982-1983).

Asia has two candidates for the one available seat (Fiji had been in the running at one time but withdrew in early 2011). The two candidates are:

- Kyrgyzstan (admitted to the UN on 2 March 1992, having been a part of the Soviet Union until its breakup in 1991), which has never served on the Council; and
- Pakistan (admitted to the UN on 30 September 1947), which has served six terms on the Council (1952-1953, 1968-1969, 1976-1977, 1983-1984, 1993-1994 and 2003-2004).

Eastern Europe has three candidates for the one available seat (it was thought at one time that Armenia would also be in the running, but it made it clear in the spring that it would not be a candidate this year.) The candidates are:

- Azerbaijan (admitted to the UN on 2 March 1992 having been a part of the Soviet Union until its breakup in 1991), which has not yet served on the Council;
- Hungary (admitted to the UN on 14 December 1955), which has served two terms on the Council (1968-1969 and 1992-1993); and
- Slovenia (admitted to the UN on 22 May 1992), which has served on the Council once (1998-1999) and was previously represented four times as part of Yugoslavia (1950-1951, 1956, 1972-1973 and 1988-1989).

To be elected, regardless of whether the election is contested, a country needs to secure the support of two-thirds of the members which are present and voting at the General Assembly session (a minimum of 129 votes if all 193 member states participate, although it is possible for some to be precluded from voting by virtue of article 19 of the Charter due to arrears in payment of financial contributions).

Formal balloting is required for elections to a principal organ of the UN such as the Council, even if candidates have been endorsed by their regional group and are running on a “clean slate”. If no candidate garners the requisite number of votes in the first round, the voting is restricted to the top vote getters (the number of countries included on the restricted ballot is limited to twice the number of vacant seats: two candidates for a single unfilled seat or four candidates for two unfilled seats). This restricted voting continues for up to three additional rounds of voting. If a

candidate still fails to obtain the minimum number of votes, unrestricted voting is reopened for any candidates for up to three rounds. This pattern of restricted and unrestricted voting continues until a candidate is successful in securing a seat. (Extended multiple rounds of voting have occurred in the past, most recently in 2006, when Guatemala and Venezuela went through 47 rounds of voting before both withdrew and Panama was elected in the 48th round. The 1979 election established an all-time high for Security Council elections with 154 rounds of voting between Colombia and Cuba before Mexico was elected in the 155th round as a compromise candidate.)

The table below compares the number of available seats by region, the declared candidates and their previous experience on the Council.

Region	Available Seats in the 2011 Election	States Running	Previous Terms on the Council
Africa	2	Mauritania Morocco Togo	One term (1974-1975) Two terms (1963-1964, 1992-1993) One term (1982-1983)
Asia	1	Kyrgyzstan Pakistan	No prior Council service Six terms (1952-1953, 1968-1969, 1976-1977, 1983-1984, 1993-1994, 2003-2004)
Eastern Europe	1	Azerbaijan Hungary Slovenia	No prior Council service Two terms (1968-1969, 1992-1993) One term (1998-1999)
Latin American and Caribbean	1	Guatemala	No prior Council service

## 2. The Contested Seats

### The African Seats

Two of the three Council seats allocated to Africa come up for election every two years (with another seat coming up for election the year in between). Elections for the seats allocated to Africa tend to be uncontested due to the fact that the Africa Group maintains an established pattern of rotation between its various subregions. In 2011, however, there is the unusual situation of three candidates being in contention for the two available seats. As only one of these seats is allocated as the North Africa/ Arab swing seat, two of the candidates, Mauritania and Morocco, are competing for the same seat. The other Africa seat is allocated by the Africa group to the Western Africa subregion. Therefore, for practical purposes, Togo is

running unopposed for the other Africa seat. (Please see Section 5 of this report for more detail on the Arab swing seat, established practices and dynamics within the group.)

It is useful to note here that Mauritania used to be in the West Africa subregional grouping until 2004 when it became a member of the North Africa group. (Some African countries have at times chosen to change their subregional affiliation by shifting from one subgroup to another.)

While the usual practice of the North African group is apparently that a new member should start at the bottom of the rotation for a Council seat, Mauritania has asserted its right as a member state to make its own choice as when to run for a seat. The contest between Mauritania and Morocco this year is complicated by the fact that Mauritania has received endorsement from the AU, whereas Morocco—who is not a member of the AU—did not.

General Assembly members are likely to take into consideration a range of factors in their voting, including historical patterns related to participation on the Council and contributions to international peace and security. All three candidates for the Africa seats have previously served on the Council.

#### *MAURITANIA*

Mauritania is the African candidate with the least recent experience on the Council, having served over three decades ago in 1974-1975. This is its first Council bid since 1973 (Mauritania did declare itself a candidate in the 2007 elections by bypassing the usual endorsement process and simply

notifying the President of the General Assembly. However, it withdrew its candidature and subsequently announced it would be running in 2011.) Mauritania emphasises that its current candidacy was endorsed by the AU in January. Member states will also likely take into consideration the fact that Mauritania has been off the Council longer than its main competitor, Morocco. As of July 2011, Mauritania was not listed as a troop contributor to UN operations by DPKO.

#### *MOROCCO*

Morocco is the African candidate with the most recent service, having served on the Council in 1992-1993. Morocco points out that its campaign is in line with the practice of rotation for Council seats established by the Africa group. The AU (of which it is not a member) is an important regional organisation, but a different entity than the Africa group. Morocco emphasises its long-standing commitment to UN peacekeeping, sustainable development and a resolution to the Middle East conflict. It has participated in a number of peacekeeping missions including the Congo operation in 1962 and the current mission in Côte d'Ivoire. Morocco is a top-twenty troop contributor with about 1,500 troops and police deployed.

#### *TOGO*

Togo emphasises its commitment to Council reform including permanent seats for countries from the global South. It also hopes to focus on strengthening international law and furthering human rights. Togo currently has about 700 troop and police peacekeepers deployed in several countries.

Most observers seem to expect that, as the only endorsed West African candidate, Togo will prevail relatively easily. However, the voting rules require formal balloting and there is no differentiation between subregions to reflect specific agreements within groups. As a result, although both Mauritania and Morocco are in competition for a 'North Africa' Arab swing seat slot, the UN General Assembly votes on both seats at once and Togo could, in principle, lose votes to both Mauritania and Morocco.

There are a number of possible election scenarios for the two Africa seats, including:

- one of the two candidates running for the Arab swing seat, as well as the candidate running for the West Africa subregion, may obtain the necessary two-thirds of the votes in the first round of voting;
- the candidate running for the West Africa subregion may obtain the necessary two-thirds of the votes in the first round with neither of the other two running for the Arab swing seat obtaining a two-thirds majority (in such a case the voting would continue for the one remaining seat until a candidate obtains the necessary number of seats);
- the two candidates running for the Arab swing seat may obtain the necessary two-thirds of the votes in the first round, resulting in no West Africa candidate being elected (a seemingly unlikely possibility due to the disciplined nature of the Africa group's rotation system); or
- multiple rounds of voting may take place because all three candidates initially fail to obtain the two-thirds majority.

### The Asian Seat

One of the two Council seats allocated to Asia comes up for election every year. Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are vying for the Asian seat this year. The candidates' contributions to international peace and security and their previous participation on the Council are varied.

#### KYRGYZSTAN

If elected, Kyrgyzstan would take a seat on the Council for the first time since it was admitted to the UN in 1992. It would also be the first of the Central Asian countries (formerly republics of the Soviet Union) elected to the Council. Kyrgyzstan emphasises its intention to represent the interests of small states and work toward broader geographic representation on the Council. It hopes to reinvigorate a number of issues on the Council's agenda if it is successful in its election bid, including Children and Armed Conflict and the Middle East. Kyrgyzstan also maintains a particular focus on climate change, as well as non-proliferation and disarmament and is a signatory of the Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone treaty. Kyrgyzstan has about a dozen police and troops deployed with peacekeeping missions.

#### PAKISTAN

If successful, Pakistan would take a seat on the Council for the 2012-2013 term after a seven year absence. As of July 2011, with over 10,000 troops and police deployed, Pakistan is the second highest troop-contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, just behind Bangladesh. It has consistently ranked first or second over the last decade. An active participant in peacekeeping for over fifty years, it has maintained this commitment in spite of competing domestic demands related to terrorism and recent extensive flooding. As the country with the most peacekeepers

deployed in Africa, Pakistan hopes to focus in part on regional issues on that continent. Neighbouring Afghanistan is of particular interest to Pakistan, as are non-proliferation, Council reform and climate change.

### The Eastern European Seat

An Eastern Europe member state is elected to the Council every other year. In 2011, three candidates are in contention for the one Eastern European seat (competition has increased since the early 1990s, when the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia increased the number of members of the group from 10 to 23).

#### AZERBAIJAN

If elected, Azerbaijan would serve on the Council for the first time since it was admitted to the UN in 1992. It hopes to ensure greater transparency in the Council's decisionmaking process and foster greater involvement in the work of the Council by member states. It believes a Council more representative of the general membership can address global challenges more effectively. Azerbaijan emphasises its commitment to non-proliferation, disarmament and counterterrorism efforts as well as the promotion of human rights. As of July 2011, Azerbaijan was not ranked as a troop-contributor to UN operations by DPKO.

#### HUNGARY

Were Hungary to win election it would undertake its third term on the Council, having served in 1968-1969 and 1992-1993. Hungary points to the experience it has accumulated in its past terms on the Council, in particular 1992-1993 when the situation in the Balkans was a significant issue of concern for the international community. It emphasises the need for a comprehensive

approach to the issues on the Council's agenda that includes consideration of local traditions, organisations and capacities in conflict situations, as well as close cooperation with regional security organisations. In addition, Hungary has been involved in a number of peacekeeping missions since 1988, including Lebanon and the DRC among others, and currently has over 80 police and troops deployed in support of peacekeeping operations.

#### SLOVENIA

Slovenia declared its intention to run within months of completing its first term as a Council member, from 1998-1999. Slovenia stresses the value of this past experience on the Council, including the fact that its current president and foreign minister both gained experience at the country's UN mission during those years. If successful in its bid for a seat, it hopes to promote conflict prevention (a focus during their first term on the Council) and regional cooperation, increase the transparency of the Council and better address climate change as a potential source of conflict. In addition, Slovenia hopes to improve targeted sanctions regimes, for example by giving special attention to listing and delisting procedures across committees. Slovenia has over a dozen police and troops deployed in support of peacekeeping operations.

## 3. The Uncontested Seat

The only uncontested seat is also sought by the only candidate in 2011 who is a founding member of the UN.

### The GRULAC Seat

Guatemala, a founding member of the UN, stresses the rights of small states to serve on the Council as one way of

ensuring broad geographical representation. It asserts that although it has not yet served on the Council, it has hard-earned historical experience dealing with long-running conflict and will be a valuable resource. Guatemala hopes to help improve on the working methods of the Council, for example by fostering more Council interaction during debates. Guatemala has also become increasingly involved in peacekeeping operations in the past decade or so, including the missions in Haiti and the DRC, and plans to support more realistic and pragmatic peacekeeping mandates in general. It has over 300 police and troops deployed to peacekeeping operations.

Guatemala's last bid for a Council seat was in 2006 and involved extended rounds of voting against Venezuela. After 47 rounds of voting over several weeks, Guatemala and Venezuela withdrew with Panama coming in as the compromise candidate in the 48th round. (Though the process took some time, the 2006 election also highlighted the potential for regional groups to play an important role in resolving such deadlocks, with GRULAC actively involved in finding a compromise candidate and in persuading Venezuela and Guatemala to step down.)

In the years since the 2006 elections, GRULAC seems to have been striving toward greater coordination in order to avoid contested seats. It has met with some success, as Mexico in 2008, Brazil in 2009, Colombia in 2010 and Guatemala in 2011 have all been sole candidates. However, some point out that the real test will come when the larger countries in the group (such as Argentina, who is running next year, Brazil, who rotates off the Council this year, or Mexico, who rotated off the

Council last year) have to wait until either their rotational turn comes up again or to negotiate trading places with another country. In addition, Caribbean countries that decide to run for the GRULAC seat may complicate the emerging commitment to fielding uncontested candidates.

Some have argued that such non-competitive elections can result in more complacent Council members because candidates will not have been required to more clearly define their priorities and policies while campaigning. However, others assert that clean slate candidates enhance effectiveness and avoid regional or wider tensions, as well as allowing candidates to use the time and resources they would have expended in contested elections to begin advance preparations for being on the Council.

#### 4. Possible Issues Involving Council Membership During 2012

While it is impossible to predict the future actions and approach of the Council based on membership alone, it may be useful to keep in mind several possibilities that exist with regard to the makeup of the Council next year. One is that long-time regional rivals India and Pakistan may serve together on the Council in 2012 (India will complete the second year of its service at the end of that year). If this were to occur, it raises the interesting question of whether their shared history (including open conflict at some times in the past) may impact on overall Council decisionmaking or the ability to reach consensus on certain issues. However, it is important to keep in mind that if Pakistan is successful in

the election, it will not be the first time the two have served on the Council concurrently. India and Pakistan have served overlapping terms three times in the past, in 1968, 1977 and 1984. It would therefore not be an unprecedented situation, although some recent tensions between the two countries may bring a novel element to their working relationship.

There is also some potential for an increased presence of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) members on the Council. At least three NAM members are likely to be elected this year (all the candidates for the African and Latin American and Caribbean seats are NAM members). This will balance the three NAM members who are rotating off the Council (Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria—while Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brazil have observer status with NAM but are not members.) However, with NAM members Azerbaijan and Pakistan running for the East European and Asian seats respectively, it is also possible that all five states elected to non-permanent seats on the Council this year could be NAM members.

Likewise, EU representation on the Council may also increase. France and the UK, two of the Council's permanent members, are part of the EU. Germany and Portugal are both EU members holding non-permanent seats on the Council until the end of 2012. With neither rotating off the Council this year, the number of EU members will hold steady. However, Hungary and Slovenia are both members of the EU and if either is elected to fill the Eastern Europe seat, this would increase the number of EU members on the Council to five, or one-third of the entire Council, for 2012.

Regardless of the outcome of this year's election, the presence of emerging regional powers will continue to have the potential to affect dynamics on the Council. While Brazil and Nigeria rotate off the Council at the end of 2011, India and South Africa will remain for another year. Germany, another participant in the Group of Four (G4), will also serve through 2012 (the G4, comprised of Brazil, Germany, India and Japan, formed in 2004 to push for expansion of the Council). In addition, two members of the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) will remain on the Council. (The aim of IBSA is to enhance trilateral relations between the countries as well as promoting broader "South-South" cooperation.)

Finally, four of the five "BRICS" members (a political grouping of emerging market countries consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) will remain on the Council after Brazil's departure. While it does not appear that the presence of G4, IBSA and BRICS countries on the Council in 2011 has resulted in dramatic changes in the way the Council carries out its work, it is prudent to take into consideration their potential coordination on issues of common concern.

### 5. Modern Regional Groupings and Established Practices

Since 1963 the regional groups for the purposes of elections to the Security Council have been governed by a formula set out in General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII). Under that resolution the seats previously available to the African and Asian states were combined. However, in reality the candidates for elections for the African and

Asian seats operate separately and this report follows that customary practice.

The UN Charter provides that non-permanent members would be elected according to equitable, geographic distribution. It does not stipulate how that should be achieved. Nor does it suggest a possible composition of appropriate geographical groups. Nevertheless, the principle of equitable geographic distribution gave rise to the establishment of electoral groups as a vehicle for achieving that goal. The regional groups, as they now operate, are as follows:

African Group	54 members
Asian Group	53 members
Eastern European Group	23 members
GRULAC	33 members
WEOG	28 members

(Currently only Kiribati does not participate in any regional grouping within the UN.) The US is not a member of any group but attends meetings of the WEOG as an observer and is considered a member of this group for electoral purposes. Israel, which was without any group membership for many years, was given temporary membership in WEOG in May 2000, which is subject to renewal every four years (Israel has announced that it plans to run for a seat on the Council under WEOG in 2018).

#### African Group

Most of the groups have informal understandings which are not codified into actual rules. The African Group is an exception to this in that it has adopted the Rules of Procedure of the AU Ministerial Committee on Candidatures within the International System for

the selection of candidates. Subregional groups within the African Group tend to follow a disciplined rotation system. Theoretically, under this system, every country in Africa should eventually get a turn to be a candidate for a seat on the Council.

In practice this does mean that the UN membership at large has little choice on the African candidate. The African rotation should follow a systematic cycle based on the following principle:

- North Africa and Central Africa rotate one seat every two years;
- Western Africa has one seat every two years; and
- Eastern Africa and Southern Africa rotate one seat every two years.

However, the picture becomes complicated at times because countries within a subregional group can change their affiliation. Also, some countries that can claim to straddle more than one geographic region have at times indeed chosen to shift from one subgroup to another. Challengers can emerge within the same subregional grouping upsetting the rotation. Candidates can often be persuaded to drop out to avoid a competitive election. Moreover, there have been times when challengers have emerged and continued all the way through the election. In addition, within a subgroup some countries may choose to run more often, while others choose to run less frequently or not at all.

The process for selecting a candidate in the Africa group usually has a defined path. First, the subregional groups select the potential candidates and forward their names to the African Group of ambassadors for endorsement. The ambassadors submit the candidates to the Committee on Candidatures of the African Group in New York which then

transmits the candidates to the Ministerial Committee on Candidatures of the AU which follows its written Rules of Procedure in selecting candidates. (The African Group and the AU are made up of the same members with the exception of Morocco which is not a part of the AU.) Regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), may add their endorsement before the list goes to the AU ministers. A final decision is then taken by the Executive Committee, made up of the AU leaders, during AU summit meetings. However, despite these written Rules of Procedure for candidate selection, some countries in the past have submitted their candidature directly to the AU Ministerial Committee on Candidatures bypassing the process in New York.

Overall the system of rotation tends to favour “clean slate” elections. There have been times when this has resulted in candidates being elected that would have struggled in a contested election and whose presence on the Council added little or nothing to resolving problems (Rwanda’s election in 1993 and its performance during the genocide in 1994 is an example.) A factor which seems to be coming more into play is the growing desire by the larger countries in the region to be elected more often than strict adherence to the rotation system would allow. It remains to be seen how this factor will play out in the future.

### **Asian Group**

In the Asian Group there are no formally established practices for rotation of seats. While it has almost the same number of countries as the African Group, the Asian Group’s wide geographic span—covering the Middle

East, Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia—has led to a much looser regional grouping.

Still some patterns have emerged. Until the mid-90s there was an almost continuous South Asian presence on the Council with India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh occupying seats on the Council. However, these countries do not appear to have a policy of not running against each other. (In 1975, India and Pakistan contested the same seat going to eight rounds with Pakistan finally winning.)

Since 1958, Japan also has been a regular presence on the Council and has accumulated 20 years on the Council by running almost every four years beginning in 1966. The lack of a formal rotation system has meant that there is often competition for the Asian seat regardless of whether a candidate declares itself far in advance. Larger countries like Japan have tended to declare their candidacy closer to the election year while smaller countries have tended to announce their decision to run many years ahead of time. The only subgroup within the Asian Group which endorses its candidates is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) made up of the ten Southeast Asian countries, though there is no policy of ASEAN regularly fielding candidates.

### **Arab Swing Seat**

There is an established practice that spans the Asian and African Groups. As discussed in Annex 2 below, General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII) provided five seats for “Asia and Africa” and in practice the seats have been divided into three seats for Africa and two for Asia. In 1967, after Jordan ended its two-year term in what had been the

Middle East seat, there was a year with no Arab state on the Council. It appears that at some point there was an informal agreement, although there seem to be no known records, that one seat would be reserved for an Arab state and that Asia and Africa would take turns every two years to provide a suitable candidate. As a result this seat is often called the “Arab swing seat”. Since 1968, the Arab candidate from the African Group has generally come from North Africa except for when Sudan occupied the seat in 1972-1973. The Asian Group works on the informal understanding that it will field a suitable Arab candidate every four years. (Lebanon holds this seat for 2010-2011.) Although this is an informal agreement between the Asian and African Groups, since 1968 a seat has been continuously occupied by an Arab country.

### **Eastern European Group**

The Eastern European Group is the smallest group, consisting of 23 states. But it is the group that has increased the most in recent years, with fifteen new members since 1991 due to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the splitting of other states in the region. The Eastern European seat was included in the permanent members’ “gentlemen’s agreement” in 1946. But soon, the meaning of that agreement was contested with the Soviet Union and the West for twenty years vying to place their preferred candidates in this seat. It also became a hotly contested seat among new member states that did not have a clear regional grouping (for example the Philippines in 1955, when there was no Asian seat). Although Turkey runs now as a member of WEOG, in 1961 it occupied the Eastern European seat on the Council.

The Eastern European Group grew significantly in the aftermath of the Cold War, with the split of Yugoslavia into six countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro), the break-up of Czechoslovakia, and the admission of some former republics of the Soviet Union. Bosnia and Herzegovina is now serving its first term on the Council in 2010-2011, following Croatia (2008-2009), Slovakia (2006-2007) and Slovenia (1998-1999). The Czech Republic (which until 1992 together with Slovakia comprised Czechoslovakia) served on the Council in 1994-1995.

### **Western European and Others Group**

WEOG is the second smallest regional grouping. It is a group whose members share broadly similar levels of economic development and political values but which is the most diverse geographically. The group comprises Western Europe plus the “Others”. This latter subgroup is made up of three members of what was previously called the British Commonwealth Group. The British Commonwealth Group grew rapidly in the late 1950s as states from Africa and Asia became independent. Most of these newly independent states eventually moved to the Asian and African Groups and to GRULAC. Canada, Australia and New Zealand became “the Others” in WEOG. (With France and the UK as members, and the US attending meetings as an observer, WEOG includes three of the five permanent members of the Council.) WEOG practices what might be called an open market approach to elections which produces a regular pattern of contested candidatures.

There are several loose subgroups within WEOG: the Nordics (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), the Benelux (Belgium, Luxembourg and The Netherlands) and CANZ (Canada, Australia and New Zealand). There are informal understandings within these subgroups which have helped members to campaign for each other—this is particularly the case with the Nordic and CANZ countries.

In the past it seems that there were some loose understandings between the subgroups which sometimes enabled them to avoid competition for the same seat. However the contested elections of 2008 (with Austria, Iceland and Turkey vying for the two seats) and 2010 (with Canada, Germany and Portugal) suggest that WEOG is likely to remain highly competitive in the coming years.

### **Latin American and Caribbean Group**

After the expansion of the Council and the reorganisation of the electoral groups that occurred as a result of General Assembly resolution 1991 A (XVIII)—which was adopted in 1963 and took effect in 1965—the Latin American Group took in the Caribbean states, several of them members of the British Commonwealth, and became the Group of Latin American and Caribbean states (GRULAC). Like most of the other groups, GRULAC has no formal rules regarding rotation. For much of the last sixty years non-Caribbean countries have tended to dominate regional representation. Historically, the group was often able to reach consensus on “clean slates”. However, the Group has also produced two of the most protracted and bitterly contested

voting sessions in UN history. As mentioned above, in 1979, the contest between Cuba and Colombia went to 154 rounds before Mexico was elected as a compromise candidate in the 155th round. In 2006, there were 47 rounds between Guatemala and Venezuela with Panama finally coming in as the compromise candidate in the 48th round.

After the difficulties in 2006, the Latin American countries in GRULAC appear to be moving towards favouring a more coordinated system to avoid highly contentious competition in future Council elections. There is an emerging sense that there should only be one candidate running each year and that Latin American countries are conscious of not competing with each other. This approach is at some risk, however, because it ignores what will happen if a Caribbean country chooses to compete (as shown when a Saint Vincent and Grenadines candidacy seemed possible early in 2010). Another possibility is that the larger countries in the group (such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico) may decide to run more regularly.

## **6. Established Practices in Becoming a Candidate**

With the exception of the African Group, which has a more codified process, most candidates follow a fairly standard path in announcing and pursuing their candidacy for the Council. If the country is a member of a subregional group like the Nordic Group within WEOG or ASEAN within the Asian Group, it will often first inform members of its subregional group of its intention to run and seek their support. The

endorsement of the subregional grouping then becomes an important factor in the second step.

The second step is to write formally to inform the monthly chair of the regional group of the country's intention to stand for election. This is then incorporated by the chair in the group's UN candidacy chart which is maintained by each regional group and reviewed at monthly group meetings. At this point most candidates prepare a circular note to all missions in New York informing them of the candidacy.

As the year for the relevant election approaches, the regional group may decide to give its endorsement and nearer to the date of the election the chair of the regional group will inform the president of the General Assembly of the "clean slate". Although there is nothing in the General Assembly's Rules of Procedure specifying that this should be done, most candidates also send a note to the Secretariat or the president of the General Assembly announcing the country's candidature for a particular year. If the country has been endorsed by its regional group, it is likely to provide that information. This becomes a guide to help the Secretariat prepare the relevant documentation for the election process.

## 7. UN Documents

### Selected General Assembly Documents

- A/65/150 (13 July 2010) was the provisional programme of the plenary for the 65th General Assembly.

- A/64/PV.20 (15 October 2009) was the plenary record of the 2009 elections of non-permanent members.
- A/59/881 (20 July 2005) was a note verbale from Costa Rica containing information on elections from 1946 to 2004.
- A/55/463 (9 October 2000) was the letter from Uganda on Sudan's candidature.
- A/RES 1991 A (XVIII) (17 December 1963) was the resolution adopting amendments to the Charter on the composition of the Council and establishing the allocation of seats to various regions.
- GAOR 1st Session, Part 1, 14th Plenary Session and Part II (12 January 1946) was the first election of non-permanent members.

### Other

- UN Charter
- A/520/Rev.15 and amendment 1 and 2 are the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly including amendments and additions.
- Repertoire of Practice of the United Nations Organs, Supplement 6, Volume III on Article 23

## 8. Useful Additional Sources

- *The Charter of the United Nations, A Commentary*, Second Edition, Volume II, Edited by Bruno Simma, et al. Oxford University Press, 2002
- *Eyes on the Prize: The Quest for Non-permanent Seats on the UN Security Council*, David Malone, Global Governance, vol. 6, no.1, January-March 2000
- *What is Equitable Geographic Representation in the Twenty-First Century* edited by Ramesh Thakur, International Peace Academy, Seminar Report, 26 March 1999
- *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, Sydney Bailey and Sam Daws, Chapter 3, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998
- *The Once and Future Security Council*, edited by Bruce Russett, St Martin's Press, 1997
- *A History of the United Nations Charter*, Ruth Russell, The Brookings Institute, 1958
- *Politics and Change in the Security Council*, International Organisation, Vol. 14, No.3, Summer 1960, pp. 381-401
- See <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/repertoire/> for analysis of the question of equitable geographical distribution under article 23.
- See <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/Summits/summit.htm> for a list of AU summit decisions
- *United Nations Handbook 2009-2010 and United Nations Handbook 2010-2011* published by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- Rules of Procedure of the AU Ministerial Committee on Candidatures within the International System, Doc. EX.CL/213 (VIII)
- *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, edited by Thomas G. Weiss and Sam Daws, Oxford University Press, 2007
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## Annex 1: Rules and Process for Election to the Council: Relevant Charter Provisions and Rules of Procedure

### Charter Provisions on Election to the Council

The UN Charter, in article 23, specifies the number of non-permanent members to be elected:

*The General Assembly shall elect ten other Members of the United Nations to be non-permanent members of the Security Council...*

It also stipulates the length of their term:

*The non-permanent members...shall be elected for a term of two years.*

The practical impact of rotation occurring every two years is mitigated by staggering the cycle, so that five members are elected each year by the General Assembly for the stipulated two-year period. This was determined by rule 142 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

Despite the specification of a two-year term there have been exceptions of members serving shorter terms. There have been one-year terms, either to break electoral deadlocks or to establish the required rotational cycle.

Article 23 also contains a provision that ensures that no member can become a de facto permanent member by being elected to continuously serve in the Council:

*A retiring member shall not be eligible for immediate re-election.*

This is further reinforced by rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, which also states that a retiring member of the Council will not be eligible for immediate re-election.

The Charter also specifies the criteria that the members of the General Assembly should apply when considering who should be elected to serve on the Council. It provides in article 23 that due regard shall be:

*...specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution.*

Contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security is often interpreted in this context as levels of contribution to peacekeeping or financial contributions for peacekeeping operations and peace processes. Contribution to the other purposes of the organisation, by contrast, is a very wide term.

A key procedural provision of the Charter, which is relevant to Security Council elections, is article 18(2). This requires a two-thirds majority vote in the General Assembly on important questions. Under that article, election to the Council is defined as an important question.

In addition, article 18(3) defines the required majority by reference to members present and voting. This refers to members casting an affirmative or negative vote. Members who abstain from voting are considered not voting.

### Relevant Rules of Procedure

Closely contested elections to the Security Council can sometimes produce tense and dramatic situations on the floor of the General Assembly. In such circumstances understanding the relevant Rules of Procedure can become very important.

The voting process is governed by rules 92, 93 and 94 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.

Under rule 92, elections to the Council are held by secret ballot. Nominations are not required. Countries simply declare their intention to run, sometimes many years ahead, either by circular note to all members of the UN or to the chair of their regional grouping, or both.

Rule 93 sets out the procedure which applies when there is only one vacancy to be filled and no candidate obtains the required two-thirds majority in the first ballot. It provides:

*...a second ballot shall be taken, which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes...if a two-thirds majority is required the balloting shall be continued until one candidate secures two-thirds of the votes cast...*

What this first part of rule 93 means is that if there are more than two candidates and no clear winner in the first ballot, the lowest polling candidate drops out and the contest then continues to a second ballot between the top two candidates. The effect of rule 93 is that voting simply continues until one candidate prevails, either by securing the required majority or because the other withdraws.

If neither candidate receives the required majority in the second and third ballots, rule 93 says that after the third inconclusive ballot, votes may be cast for *any eligible ... Member*. This allows new candidates to come into the process and the fourth ballot is therefore technically referred to as an unrestricted ballot. (Also it would allow

any candidate excluded after the first restricted ballot to come back again.)

If a result is not achieved after three of these unrestricted ballots, rule 93 requires that the pool again be reduced to the top two. This cycle then repeats until a result is achieved. The emergence of new candidates during the unrestricted stage is rare, but not unprecedented. It is not unusual after a succession of inconclusive ballots, if a trend is starting to emerge in one direction, for the candidate with fewer votes to withdraw.

Rule 94 is similar to rule 93, but is applied when there are two or more seats to be filled.

*When two or more elective places are to be filled at one time under the same conditions, those candidates obtaining in the first ballot the majority required shall be elected.*

Rule 94 also specifies that if additional rounds of voting are required, the pool is reduced by a formula which says that remaining candidates should not be more than twice the number of places available.

## Annex 2: Historical Background

In 1946, at the outset of the UN, the Charter provided for 11 members of the Security Council: five permanent members and six elected members.

Article 23(2) included a provision that in the first election of Council members, three members would be chosen for a period of one year so that in the future three new members could be elected annually. This was decided by drawing lots for the one- and two- year terms.

In the first election on 12 January 1946 the following countries were elected: Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland. The pattern of geographical distribution was: two seats for Latin America, one for the Middle East, one for Eastern Europe, one for Western Europe and one for the Commonwealth.

The interpretation of what equitable geographic distribution should mean in terms of seats was based on an informal agreement among the permanent members sometimes known as the London Agreement. From the start there was a lack of agreement on what had been agreed to. The US saw the 1946 formula as only applying to the first election, but the Soviet Union maintained that there had been a gentlemen's agreement of a more general nature on the future meaning of geographic distribution.

Although the Charter clearly specifies a two-year term for elected members of the Council, in addition to the 1946-47 period, split terms started to occur in the late 1950s until the Council was enlarged in 1965. This was in part driven by fall-out from the disagreement over regional rotation and associated Cold War politics. But the aspirations of the newly independent countries were also an important factor. The first example of this was seen in 1955 when the Philippines and Poland were in contest. After four inconclusive ballots Poland withdrew and Yugoslavia entered. However, the stalemate continued and after two months and over thirty rounds of voting, it was informally agreed that the Philippines would withdraw but that Yugoslavia would resign after one year, at which point the Philippines would run

as the only candidate for that seat. Over the next few years this became an increasingly common feature. For example, the 1960-61 seat was shared between Poland and Turkey, the 1962-63 term between Romania and the Philippines and 1964-65 between Czechoslovakia and Malaysia.

By the early 1960s there was a growing acceptance that the original composition of the Council had become inequitable and unbalanced. Between 1945 and 1965 UN membership rose from 51 to 117 member states, with the proportion of Asian, African and Caribbean states increasing from 25 percent to about 50 percent. On 17 December 1963 the General Assembly adopted resolution 1991 A(XVIII) which contained amendments to the Charter addressing the issue by increasing the number of elected members to ten. The resolution also dealt with the issue of geographic distribution, which was resolved as follows:

- five from the African and Asian states (subsequently subdivided in practice into two seats for the Asian Group and three seats for the African Group);
- one from Eastern European states;
- two from Latin American states (including the Caribbean); and
- two from Western European states and Other states (including Australia, Canada and New Zealand).

At the same time article 27 was altered so that resolutions of the Council required the vote of nine instead of seven members. This also meant that for the first time the permanent members could be out-voted by non-permanent members, although only on procedural questions.

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