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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Statement to informal meeting (closed) of the plenary on the intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) on Security Council reform

Statement by H.E. Dr Fiona Webster
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia
to the United Nations in New York

Thank you, Co-Chairs, for convening this meeting to discuss the status of
IGN documents.

Let me begin by expressing Australia's solidarity with the people and
Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines amid this terrible crisis.

Like many others present today, Australia has for many years participated
in these negotiations in good faith. Our participation in this forum was
driven by the belief that Security Council reform would support an open
rules-based international order and help address global challenges.

It has now been more than a decade since this Assembly adopted decision
62/557 commencing the IGN process.

Yet despite the years elapsed and the continued and unwavering support for Security Council reform from members of this Assembly, we are no closer to reaching consensus than we were in 2008.

In that time, the global community has certainly had its fill of shared challenges.

Addressing this meeting in January, Australia's Permanent Representative spoke about the impact of the global pandemic and how it has added a new and more urgent dimension to Security Council reform.

Consequently, and as stated here before, Australia strongly urges that this forum adopt text-based negotiations. In our view, this approach remains the only viable way out of the current stalemate and it offers a path towards achieving meaningful progress.

Text-based negotiations help to build consensus. They enable delegations to engage openly and with flexibility, factors that are key in overcoming some of the known differences among delegations.

Furthermore, it allows each delegation's positions to be accurately identified and recorded. Improved understanding of various positions will only improve dialogue and the prospects of finding common ground – which we know in many cases already exists.

Text-based negotiations also have the benefit of being transparent. As we work to ensure the ongoing relevance and effectiveness of the Security

Council, we must ensure our processes demonstrate accountability to Member States and to the citizens we represent.

If there was ever a time to adopt a pragmatic approach to progressing Security Council reform beyond the repetition of entrenched positions – it is surely now, as we reflect on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and seize on the flexibility and adaptability each delegation has shown throughout this challenging period.

Australia stands ready to participate actively and constructively in text-based negotiations. And we once again express our thanks to the Co-Chairs for convening this important discussion on the status of IGN documents.

Thank you.

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