



Forum: Security Council

Issue: Reforming the United Nations for its 75th Anniversary

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Overview of the Issue

Since its establishment in 1946, there have been multiple reforms, as well as proposals to reform the United Nations in order to keep up with the ever-changing political, economic and ideological relationships between member states as well as to answer the overarching question: Who decides? As the 75th anniversary of the United Nations approaches, the world is very different to what it was in 1946, therefore, the UN needs to reflect these changes through the way it is run and composed.

The first major issue whilst observing the composition of the United Nations is the Security Council. The United Nations Security Council depicts the power dynamics that existed in 1945 through its permanent membership which is made up of the victors of the Second World War who gave themselves privileges such as veto power and created the UN charter to benefit themselves. There is a clear misrepresentation of the way things are today as huge contributors to the U.N., and regional superpowers such as Brazil and Japan do not have permanent membership. The African Group has requested two permanent positions due to 'historical injustices'. No consensus has been reached on this.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is considered 'a twin' and similarly carries many procedural and structural flaws which are often criticised to be lacking in "transparency, accountability and democratic process, and they represent richer states' interests over poor states' development." Structurally, the U.N. Charter did not give ECOSOC decision-making power and it was placed under the authority of the General Assembly, making it "a second class body". All reform efforts have been to give it more authority whilst also being more representative and open than Security Council.



Key Terms

Reform

To make changes in order to improve something.

Security Council

One of the six principal organs of the United Nations, charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Veto Power

The right by the P5 members to cancel or postpone decisions being made in Security Council.

Economic and Social Council

A principal organ in the United Nations, responsible for coordinating the economic, social and related work of 15 Specialized U.N. agencies such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Health Organisation.

UN Charter

The foundational treaty of the United Nations which dictated which organs would be set up, how they would be run and what powers they had.

Countries and Organizations Involved

G4

The *Group of Four* is made up of India, Brazil, Japan and Germany, is currently seeking permanent membership in the Security Council as they represent current economic and geo-political powers in the world. They are proposing six new permanent positions, one for each of them and two for African countries with veto right still being debated. They have also opened themselves up to compromises.

P5

Consisting of the United Kingdom, United States of America, France, China and Russia, the *Permanent Members of the Security Council* hold veto power and have to unanimously agree on all reforms which take place in UNSC. They are currently against reforms which may take away the power they hold. However, France and Britain support the G4 whilst USA, Russia and China are against it.

Small 5 (S-5)

The *Small Five* consists of Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. They are a minor interest group on the reformation debate and have influenced higher powers within the U.N. to take action. An example of this is their 2006 General Assembly resolution which prompted the one written in 2013.
[see below]

Related UN resolutions and Previous Approaches to Solving the Issues

- Presidential note (S/2006/507), July 2006 aimed at improving the Security Council working methods, however voluntary restriction of veto use was not an included measure.
- General Assembly Resolution (A/66/L.42), 28 March 2012 was a tabled resolution to improve transparency and accountability relating to Security Council proceedings. It was brought forth by the S-5.
- General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/68/1), 13 November 2013 mandated ECOSOC to provide a substantive leadership to the system through adoption of an annual theme; stagger the segments of the Council throughout the year, with a work programme cycle at the beginning of July and to monitor and promote the balanced integration of sustainable development.

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