



# AUSTRALIA



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**Plenary**  
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## Security Council Reform

**Statement by H.E. the Hon Robert Hill  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative  
of Australia to the United Nations**

(Check against delivery)

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Mr President

We are grateful for this opportunity to discuss another element of the critically important UN reform project. Members will be familiar with Australia's work for UN reform. Both nationally, and as a member of CANZ, we have actively engaged to find ways to make the UN more effective, efficient, and accountable. And this is the prism through which we view Security Council reform.

We were disappointed that the UN Summit process in 2005 did not arrive at an acceptable outcome on Security Council reform. This was a missed opportunity. However, it was not the end of the road, and, along with many other states, Australia remains engaged with the process of Security Council reform.

Australia has long been a supporter of appropriate reform of the Security Council. The world has changed a great deal in the past 61 years, and we need to ensure that the UN's security structures accurately reflect the impact of those changes.

A more representative Council needs to be balanced against the ongoing need for the Council to effectively discharge its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The ability of the Security Council to act resolutely, decisively and quickly are paramount. Its responsibility for collective security places

upon it the highest expectations of the international community and, it should not be enlarged so far as to make it unwieldy, or unable to make consensus decisions. The creation of a small number of new permanent and non-permanent positions on the Security Council seems to us to be an appropriate way to achieve this balance.

Australia considers the claims of Japan and India to be clear. Both make major contributions to the UN system, either in financial contributions, peacekeeping commitments or through a history of consistent and active engagement with the organisation. Australia also continues to support Brazil and appropriate African representation. Australia has consistently opposed the extension of veto rights to any new members.

Reform of the Security Council's membership goes hand-in-hand with reform of the Council's working methods. The workload of the Council appears to increase in intensity and volume each year and it makes sense to review its mechanisms. And to this end we are grateful for the 'S5' proposals on Working Methods reform. We also note the work of Ambassador Oshima and his colleagues in the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions. A number of the ideas produced in these forums may ultimately improve the effectiveness of the Council.

We would sound a note of caution that, in working towards appropriate processes for the Security Council, we must not jeopardise the Council's capacity to act in accordance with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and Security, as outlined in Article 24 of the UN Charter. This criterion should be applied to any proposed reforms to the Council's working methods.

Mr President

We thank you for convening this useful discussion and look forward to further discussions on UN reform issues in coming months.