



**Statement by Ambassador Allan Rock  
Permanent Representative of Canada  
to the United Nations General Assembly  
introducing draft Resolution A/59/L.68 under Agenda Item 53:  
question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the  
Security Council and related matters**

**New York, 26 July 2005**

Mr. President:

Canada is honoured to introduce Resolution L.68. The objective of this Resolution is to achieve the fairest and most democratic approach to the complex and controversial question of Security Council enlargement, while seeking the broadest possible consensus on how to proceed.

INTRODUCTION

Let me begin, Mr. President, by explaining why Canada is introducing this resolution.

First, while we recognize the importance of Security Council reform, we want to see it achieved without unduly dividing the membership, particularly at a time when we must come together on the even more important agenda we will place before leaders in September. It will not serve our larger purpose if we are left divided after choosing among resolutions that favour a few, leaving fissures and factions as we pick winners and losers, once and for all.

Resolution L.68 represents an effort in good faith to avoid such an “all or nothing” showdown.

It would add no permanent members to the Council, but rather would create new permanent seats in each region, leaving it to the members of each regional group to decide which member states should sit in those seats, and for how long.

This approach would permit us to achieve all of the major objectives of Security Council reform, while preserving an environment conducive to broad agreement in September, and to co-operation in the years ahead.

Second, Mr. President, Canada sincerely believes that it is not in the best interests of the United Nations, it is not in the best interests of the great majority of its members, to add new permanent members to the Security Council. Let me emphasize at once, Mr. President, that our purpose is not to oppose the aspirants, but rather to support a principle: that widening the circle for the few who seek special status, no matter how worthy their candidacies, would make the Security Council less accountable for its conduct, more remote from the membership and less representative of the world's regions.

RESOLUTION L.68

Mr. President, let me now describe the outcome that Canada favours.

Resolution L.68 would enlarge the Council to 25 seats, with 20 of those seats to be elected for two year terms. It would distribute the elected seats equitably among the regions. It would allow for consecutive re-election. And it would leave to each region the decision about arrangements for both the rotation of the seats and the duration of each member state's period on the Council.

Why do we prefer this approach, Mr. President? There are five reasons.

### DEMOCRACY

First, it is democratic. At a time when so many of us promote democratic principles of governance, is it not essential that we reflect those same principles in our own governance: in the crucial decision about which member states will serve on the UN's most powerful body? Is it not fundamental that where regions are accorded a permanent presence, those who serve on the Council will manifestly hold the continuing confidence of their regional colleagues, tested and expressed at intervals that the regional members themselves consider appropriate? And what is more basic to the very notion of democracy than elections: not once and forever, in which power shifts permanently to the office-holder, but periodically, so that authority remains with the electors, and holding the office is seen as a privilege, and not a right.

After all, Mr. President, in a democratic system, the electorate—in this case, the member states—must have the authority to choose their representatives. I know of no democracy in which a single election is sufficient to entitle the winner to remain in office in perpetuity.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

Second, the approach provided for in Resolution L.68 makes the Council more accountable to the member states.

Mr. President,

Permanence is the polar opposite of accountability. Permanence produces positions that reflect national perspectives. Permanence claims the power of the office as a right, and forevermore.

Resolution L.68 takes a different approach. It accepts that there will be no change in the permanent five. But it does not expand the permanent class beyond those chosen in 1945. And it draws on more contemporary values in proposing an enlarged council in which membership is earned, by winning and keeping the confidence of one's peers. Apart from being sound in principle, the accountability that is inherent in this approach is also more likely to produce a Security Council in which regional and global concerns predominate over simply national interests.

### FLEXIBILITY

Third, Mr. President, our Resolution provides for a flexible allocation of Council seats. In a changing world, with its dynamic regions, it is surely unwise to lock into place arrangements that may reflect today's circumstances, but in a world in which tomorrow may confront us with very different needs. The very process of change that has now made Security Council reform desirable argues for a flexible, not a fixed formula, for that process of change is never-ending. And who can say what changes will come in the decades ahead? And so for that reason, Resolution L.68 allows each regional group to adjust the allocation of seats among its members, depending on the needs of a particular time, depending on the capacity of certain of its members to serve in the interests of all.

But Mr. President, there is another aspect of this Resolution's flexibility that should be stressed. It allows for repeated terms of different aggregate length among the elected seats permanently allocated to each region.

Let me illustrate the value of that asymmetrical approach with reference to example. Resolution L.68 permanently accords Africa six seats on the Security Council. The African Group has made it clear that it wants to have two representatives on the Council who will be there for the long term. Our resolution empowers the African Group to identify two of its members who will represent the region for as long a period as that group decides. Since the decision about re-election would belong to the members of the African Group, they would have the authority to make those two

member states continuous members of the Security Council. The result would be that the region would have permanent seats, and the members of the regional group could decide that some of those seats would be held continuously by certain of their members. The balance of the seats set aside for Africa could be held for periods of a duration to be determined by the region. Now that asymmetrical arrangement illustrates how the flexibility of the approach proposed in this Resolution can be made to serve the specific interests of each particular group.

### FAIRNESS

Fourth, Mr. President, Resolution L.68 provides for fairness, by creating the possibility that a greater number of member states could rotate through the seats allocated to each region. None of the seats created by our resolution would be set aside for a chosen few. All twenty of the elected seats would be available to member states. In an organisation of equal sovereign members, there should be no second class countries. Our resolution would give every state a voice.

### AVOIDING A DIVISIVE VOTE

Fifth, and finally, Mr. President, Resolution L.68 provides for meaningful and effective Security Council reform, but without forcing divisive and potentially damaging votes on the General Assembly, as individual states vie among themselves for special status. Each of the other resolutions before the Assembly provides for new permanent members of the Council. But if either one of those Resolutions were to be adopted, that would only be the beginning of a contentious and a competitive process. How much time would be needed, how many secret ballots would be cast, what tensions and pressures would be created, during the inevitable subsequent steps?

The approach that Resolution L.68 puts forward would entail a single initial vote of the Assembly, with subsequent elections that would simply implement the choices of the regional groups.

### CONCLUSION

Mr. President:

It is precisely because structural change in this institution is so difficult that it has been so rarely attempted. There have been but a handful of occasions in the 60 year history of the United Nations when member states have been called upon to make defining decisions about its format and about its future.

And yet, there is a sense among many of us that this is such a moment. A rare opportunity to make significant change to the UN's most significant body.

When such historic decisions are made—choices that will have profound effects for generations to come—it is necessary that they be made wisely and that they be made based on principle; that they reflect our shared values and that they advance our common purpose.

Mr. President, in this case, and measured against that standard, Canada believes that the wiser course, the principled course, is clear. It is to choose the option that is consistent with our shared values of democracy, of accountability, of flexibility and of fairness.

We believe that Resolution L.68 meets that test. Canada will support it, and we respectfully urge other member states to do the same.