

Seminar on UN Security Council Reform: UNSC 2020 and 2050

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From Rwanda to Syria, from Eastern Europe to Asia, the UN Security Council is failing to protect millions of innocent civilians and refugees. There is a widespread agreement that the Security Council *must* reform - but how?

To discuss this question, on June 15th 2016, the World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP) co-hosted a seminar on UN Security Council reform, along with the Workable World Trust and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. The meeting was held across the road from the UN Headquarters in New York, and was very well attended - dozens of senior UN diplomats, leading UN experts and civil society representatives arrived, demonstrating a growing momentum and interest in UN Reform, and in particular, Security Council reform.

Different models for restructuring the Security Council were presented at the seminar - a few of them can be viewed [here](#). Also discussed at the event were the next steps in the two recent initiatives for Security Council veto restraint – [the ACT initiative](#), which at the time had [111 government supporters](#), and the [French-Mexican initiative](#) which had [86 supporters](#). Both initiatives were [strongly endorsed by international NGOs](#), who advocate a stop to the misuse of the veto in the Security Council.

“We realize the pessimism that often surrounds ‘Security Council reform’ but behind these three words reside the fate of the UN and the prevention of World War III,” said **Mr. Bill Pace** Executive Director of WFM-IGP, in his opening remarks. **Prof. Joseph Schwartzberg**, author of “[Transforming the United Nations System: Designs for a Workable World](#)” and director of the Workable World Trust, outlined a proposal for structural Security Council reform in his [presentation](#) and accompanying [PowerPoint](#). He stressed, “to change the Security Council, we must build effective civil society and governmental coalitions and demand a ‘Workable-World’. It is not because it is difficult that we are afraid to act; it is because we are afraid to act that it is difficult.” Executive Director of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung - New York Office, **Ms. Bettina Luis Rurup**, said in her opening comments: “paraphrasing our Trust’s founder, it’s true to say that today the UN needs democracy - but it also needs democrats.”

H.E. Ms. Raimonda Murmokaitė, the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the UN, spoke about her frustrating experience as the president of the United Nations Security Council in 2014 and 2015, stating “we are not a factory producing press statements and resolutions.” She further stated, “We need to ask ourselves - what is the impact of these statements and resolutions? Are they just an excuse for our existence, or do they make a difference?” **H.E. Mr. Christian Wenaweser**, the Permanent Representative of Liechtenstein to the UN, spoke about the ACT initiative on the Code of

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Conduct regarding Security Council actions against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. He called for civil society to pressure more governments to sign the Code of Conduct.

H.E. Prof. Ibrahim Gambari the Former Foreign Minister of Nigeria and Co-Chair of the [Commission on Global Security, Justice and Governance](#), spoke about the absurdity of the Security Council veto power, the difficult and unequal relations between the UN and the African Union, and about the commission's approach to Security Council reform. **Mr. Fergus Watt**, Executive Director of [World Federalist Movement – Canada \(WFM-C\)](#), spoke about a campaign for [United Nations Emergency Peace Service \(UNEPS\)](#). **Prof. Thomas Weiss**, a leading authority on the UN, presented a skeptic's view regarding the chances of meaningful UN Security Council reform in the near future. He also spoke about the missed opportunity to reform the UN at the end of the cold war. **Ms. Nicole Fritz**, from the African Futures and Innovation Program, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Pretoria, South Africa, spoke about the [Elect the Council](#) initiative for structural Security Council Reform. **Prof. William Durch**, the Research Director of the Commission on Global Security, Justice, and Governance, argued that aging institutions like the Security Council *can* be reformed and made more relevant to the needs of our times.

Notes taken during the seminar can be accessed [here](#), and the general program of the seminar can be accessed [here](#). Other documents handed out which might be of interest included a [summary of recent efforts to reform the Security Council](#), produced by the Center for UN Reform Education, and a [timeline of review processes and outcomes](#), produced by the International Peace Institute.

For any questions or input regarding the seminar and our work on Security Council reform please email info@wfm-igp.org.