



G4 Foreign Ministers Meeting

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Why in News

Recently, Foreign Ministers from the **Group of 4** (G4), consisting of **India, Brazil, Japan and Germany**, participated in a virtual meeting.

G4 is a group of countries that are seeking permanent membership of the **United Nations Security Council** (UNSC).

Key Points

- G4 will seek concrete and time-bound outcomes during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly.
 - The UN will celebrate its **75th anniversary** on 24th October 2020.
- The Ministers reaffirmed their common resolve to finally take decisive steps towards the **early and comprehensive reform of the Security Council** that was envisaged by Heads of State and Government in the **2005 World Summit**.
 - The 2005 World Summit was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York.
 - All governments expressed strong and unambiguous commitment to achieve the **Millennium Development Goals** by 2015.
 - It set up **two new bodies**, a **Peacebuilding Commission** to help countries in transition from war to peace, and a strengthened **Human Rights Council**.

- **G4 on UNSC Reforms**
 - **Ensuring greater representation for Africa:** Africa needs to be represented in **both the permanent and non-permanent categories** of UNSC to **correct the historical injustice** against this continent with regard to its under-representation in the Security Council.
 - **Enhanced role of developing countries and of major contributors to the UN:** To make UNSC more **legitimate, effective and representative**, it is needed to increase the number of permanent (from 5 to 11) and non-permanent (from 10 to 14) seats.
 - The permanent seats shall be elected in the following manner: Two from African States; Two from Asian States; One from Latin American and Caribbean States ; One from Western European and Other States.
 - Non-permanent members shall be elected according to the following pattern : One from African States ; One from Asian States ; One from Eastern European States ; One from Latin American and Caribbean State
 - The UNSC reforms proposed earlier had been opposed by the five permanent members (P5) of UNSC as they demanded veto power for new members as well (**Rizali Plan**). However, later the new countries decided to forego the veto power for new countries which was accepted by P5 countries (**Rizali Reform Plan**).
- **Text-Based Negotiations:** The G4 will work with other reform-minded countries and groups to start **text-based negotiations (TBN)**

India is a proponent of TBN at the UN. Countries opposed to UNSC reform, including China, are hesitant to have TBN for intergovernmental negotiations on the grounds that the matter is **too sensitive** for text.
- **Concerns over IGN:** Two sessions in February and March 2020 of Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) on UNSC reform were adjourned due to **Covid-19**, which could have taken place virtually.
 - The countries expressed concern that IGN **lacks the necessary openness and transparency** and is constrained by **flawed working methods**.
 - IGN should also have included a reflection of the **Common African Position** as enshrined in the **Ezulwini Consensus** and the **Sirte Declaration**.
 - The **Ezulwini Consensus (2005)** is a position on international relations and reform of the United Nations, agreed by the African Union. It calls for a more representative and democratic Security council, in which Africa, like all other world regions, is represented.
 - The **Sirte Declaration (1999)** was the resolution adopted to establish the African Union.

- **Groups Opposed to UNSC Reforms:** An informal "**coffee club**" or **Uniting for Consensus Group** has opposed UNSC reforms.
 - Most members of the club are middle-sized states who oppose bigger regional powers grabbing permanent seats in the UN Security Council.
 - While **Italy and Spain are opposed to Germany's** bid for UNSC's permanent membership, **Pakistan is opposed to India's bid**. Similarly, **Argentina is against Brazil's** bid and **Australia opposes Japan's**.
- **India's Position:** India, will commence a two-year non-permanent term on the UNSC in January, 2021
 - It has long sought a **permanent seat** at the Council.
 - Four of the five permanent members of the Security Council – USA, UK, France and Russia support giving India a permanent seat at the Council. Only China is opposed to this.
 - India is also seeking reforms to democratize the UN, such as UNSC reforms and **UN peacekeeping reforms**.

Intergovernmental Negotiations

Source: TH