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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. Meaningful reform of UNSC will enhance its legitimacy, effectiveness and representativeness. Discuss (250 words)

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Approach:

- Give brief introduction of UNSC.
- Give reasons for UNSC reform bringing out how reform will bring legitimacy, effectiveness and representativeness.
- Give conclusion.

Answer:

Introduction:

- The United Nations Security Council is the United Nations' most powerful body established in 1946, with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.
- It has five permanent members along with ten elected members with two-year terms.
- Since 1990, the Council has dramatically increased its activity and it now meets in nearly continuous session. It dispatches military operations, imposes sanctions, mandates arms inspections, deploys election monitors and more.

Body

Considering the significance of UNSC in geopolitics reforms in UNSC are in principle critical for:

- **Representativeness:**
 - The Security Council is not representative of the geopolitical realities of the modern world. Both Africa and Latin America lack a permanent seat on the Council, while Europe is overrepresented and Asia is underrepresented. These problems are not easily addressed because the Permanent Five members (P5) of the Council do not want to see their power diminished.
 - Permanent seats concentrate power in the hands of five and lacks global representative characteristic which is necessary for its legitimacy. Concentration of power is antithetical to multilateralism.
 - The Council does not reflect contemporary power realities and should therefore be reformed to reflect the new realities of the 21st century.

- **Legitimacy**
 - Enlarged council would address the democratic deficit, which prevents effective multilateralism, a multilateralism that is based on a democratically-evolved global consensus.
 - P5 countries often used power of veto to serve its own interest e.g. veto security council resolutions against allied regimes, for example, China and Russia have used their veto for Council action against Sudan and Zimbabwe. China frequently uses this power to block India's effort to designate wanted terrorist Masood Azhar as Global terrorist. Such actions rob UNSC of its legitimacy.
 - Reforms like limiting the use of the veto to vital national security issues; requiring agreement from multiple states before exercising the veto; or abolishing the veto entirely have been suggested.
- **For making UNSC transparent and effective**
 - The S-5 (Costa Rica, Jordan, Lichtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland) advocates for more transparency and coordination between the Security Council and the General Assembly and Economic and Social committees. The transparent functioning of UNSC will improve the effectiveness of UNSC.
 - Another suggested popular reform is the improved coordination and coherence of the UN's many agencies, funds, programs, departments, research institute and other bodies which will result in efficiency in UN in general and UNSC specifically.
- **Expansion of membership:**

There are several UNSC reform suggestion by different groups e.g. Group of Four (Brazil, Germany, Japan and his country), called for the expansion of both the permanent and non?permanent categories of membership to enhance the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness. Similarly, it has also been suggested that an African nation be given a seat on the Security Council.

Conclusion:

UNSC reforms are crucial for global governance in globalised era. Without an effective institution to address the global security needs there is possibility of escalation of international conflicts.