



AFRICA'S SEAT AT THE TABLE: AFRICAN AGENCY AND UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM AFTER THE PACT FOR THE FUTURE, 2024–2026

ANYALEBECHI, Shammah Mahakwe, PhD

shammah.anyalebechi@ust.edu.ng

Department of Political Science, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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Abstract:

This study examines African agency in United Nations Security Council reform from the adoption of the Pact for the Future on 22 September 2024 to September 2026. It asks whether the Pact's commitment to correct the historical injustice done to Africa changed Africa's stance on reform, or whether it merely confirmed recognition without transferring power. The qualitative systemic narrative analysis draws on the Pact, the United Nations Charter, records of intergovernmental negotiations, African Union decisions, statements by the permanent members, Security Council practice, and peer-reviewed scholarship. The analysis draws on African agency theory and historical institutionalism. The results address two hypotheses. First, African actors made important normative and procedural advances: Sierra Leone's high-level debate, coordinated Committee of Ten diplomacy, reaffirmation of the Ezulwini Consensus, the Lusaka process, and the formal transmission of the African Model put an African-authored proposal on firmer ground in United Nations deliberations. These gains did not result in new seats, veto rights, or a Charter amendment by September 2026. Second, continental unity still needs to become a cross-regional deal acceptable under Article 108, involving all five permanent members. The main challenges are competing visions of reform, uncertainty over permanent-seat selection, and opposition to granting the veto privilege. The study concludes that although Africa is no longer a representational debate and African actors now set the agenda, they have yet to become more constitutive of the institution. It requires a twofold strategy: safeguarding the Common African Position and considering sequenced options, transparent selection criteria, regional accountability, and an enhanced partnership to develop a Charter-ready document.

Keywords: African agency, Security Council reform, Pact for the Future, Ezulwini Consensus, African Model, veto.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of permanent representation for Africa on the United Nations Security Council is based on a contradiction. Although African states are the largest regional bloc in the General Assembly, there is no permanent member of the Council and African issues are an important element of the peace and security agenda of the Council. The Council remains an echo of the power distribution that was put in place in 1945. It has 15 seats, 5 of which are permanent and have veto power and 10 elected, of which 3 seats are normally reserved for Africa. In 2024, a total of 73 country/region specific Council meetings focused on Africa, and 22 of the 37 country/region specific Council resolutions adopted in the year related to the continent (United Nations Security Council, 2025). Representation is not therefore, a matter of symbolic inclusion, but is about who formulates mandates, who has the power to set an agenda, who sanctions and conducts peace operations and who can block an adopted decision through the veto.

Since 2005, the African Union (AU) has been promoting a Common African Position. The two permanent seats (the veto remains as long as it is in use) and the five non-permanent seats are provided for in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration, respectively. The call is for the inclusion of corrective justice in the sovereign equality: mostly absent during the design of the order of the Charter, but extensively governed in Africa. But there is also a negotiating dilemma with this position. There is an asset in African diplomats' unity and there is a conflict between the maximal terms and the reluctance of the permanent members to have their privilege reduced and there are other models which like the new elected or longer terms.



The Pact for the Future was a shift in the political debate in this conflict. It was adopted by the General Assembly on 22 September 2024 and it committed states to reform the Council and to make the redress of the historical injustice against Africa a priority (United Nations General Assembly, 2024). It also called for deeper intergovernmental negotiations, to be done without delay. This was the most explicit universal political support for Africa's special representational claim in decades. What matters, however, is if recognition had an impact on bargaining power. No seats change nor does the veto with a declaration. Charter amendment is a two thirds vote of the General Assembly and a two thirds vote of the UN members, including all permanent members (United Nations, 1945). The institutional threshold allows each of the permanent members to block the reform process at the ratification stage.

The timeframe 2024-2026 is analytically relevant, as a result of the developments since the Pact. The AU Assembly reiterated the Common African Position, the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government (C-10) translated the African demand into an African Model and the model was officially handed over to the co-chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations on 7th April 2026. This led to model focused meetings, but the General Assembly once again agreed that the intergovernmental negotiations need to take place during the next session on 28 July 2026 (United Nations General Assembly, 2026). Africa was accorded procedural visibility and textual presence, and unsettled, reform.

This paper asks the following questions: How does African agency affected the Security Council reform after the Pact for the Future? It argued that the African actors were able to achieve meaningful normative and procedural gains through articulating injustice, having a common agenda and proposing an African authored model.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 African Agency

African agency calls into question the passive object of external rules. Agency: The capacity of African states, organisations, diplomats and social actors to set preferences, mobilise resources and influence outcomes with others. It is relational: material weakness does not mean lack of choice, but rather can be a limitation on negotiation, coalition-building or normative entrepreneurship. Brown and Harman (2013), Chipaike and Knowledge (2018) and Coffie and Tiky (2021) are agents in national, regional and transnational spaces. It is not then a question of the presence or absence of "Africa"'s agency, but of whose agency and what kind of agency and in what institutional space and for what effect?

Collective agency is important in the context of multilateral reform. If the African UN members coordinate, they have agenda power, voting weight and legitimacy. While the AU, its C-10 and the African Group in New York are a link between continental decisions and General Assembly diplomacy, the AU's global presence has been constrained at times (Welz, 2013). The national governments need to have agreed language and be prepared to deal with competing ambitions and invest in ongoing negotiation to secure collective action. More generally, Eyina et al. (2023) illustrate the ability of institutional fragility, trust and capacity to implement to affect regional integration. In the case of the Security Council reform, declaratory unity has no meaning, unless it's backed by coordination, technical writing and credible procedures for the selection of the representatives.

There are also various depths of agency. Discursive agency refers to changes in the way an issue is described; agenda-setting agency refers to the securing of an issue to formal deliberation; bargaining agency refers to changes in others' position; and constitutive agency refers to changes in rules or allocation of authority. This distinction assists in not being over-dramatic. Discursive influence and formal presentation of the African Model is seen in historical-injustice language of the Pact. Neither of these, alone, represent evidence of African states' changes to the Charter or of their permanent membership.

2.2 Security Council Reform and Representation

The intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform have five related questions: categories of membership, veto, regional representation, size and working methods of an expanded Council and the relationship between the Council and General Assembly. There is a consensus on enlargement but a diversity of views on institutional design (Lättilä & Ylönen, 2019). The Group of Four is in favour of new permanent and elected seats, Uniting for Consensus is against new national permanent seats and in favour of greater elected or longer term representation while the African position wants both permanent and additional elected seats. These models distribute status, accountability and opportunity for region in various ways.

There is a legitimacy – efficiency trade off as the literature suggests, but it can be a misleading comparison. A Council without big areas could lack in both representative legitimacy and local knowledge and thus could affect the compliance and implementation. However, the greater the number of members with blocking powers the more complex it is to bargain larger. The political economy of the Council also creates incentives and opportunities for elected members, but they are not as strong as for permanent members (Vreeland & Dreher, 2014). Alene, Ali and Tadesse (2023) consider the negotiability of the proposed model to be lessened while their view of the claim being made by the African continent is just. In the same vein, Maseng and Lekaba (2014) make a connection between Council reform and the problems of



integration on the African continent. The challenge is whether to translate a moral imperative into an institutional design that would be able to obtain the supermajority and consent of permanent members that Article 108 demands.

The most stringent distributive question is the veto. African states are not happy with a hierarchical system in which no African member can prevent action in the continent. It doesn't argue whether or not the Ezulwini position should be desirable, but that it is there and equality should be extended to new permanent members. In most incumbent support there has been a reluctance to accept new veto holders. For example, the United States has already announced two permanent African seats in September 2024, but has not pledged to the veto (Reuters, 2024). Such an offer enhances the politics of inclusion, without compromising the existing five's central legal privilege.

The second problem that is yet to be solved is selection. Though the Charter states that states may be members of the Council, the AU is able to elect Africa's permanent representatives. Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt and other states have different demographic, diplomatic and geographic claims and rotation may result in more diffuse forms of ownership with less sense of continuity and the traditional notions of 'permanence'. Thus, the development of an Africa-wide model of legitimacy for a continent and its connection with designation, performance obligations and accountability to the wider Africa membership in the context of the Charter is needed.

2.3 The Pact for the Future

The Pact for the Future is not an amendment to the Charter, but is a political compact of the General Assembly. The significance of its importance is the authorisation it grants collectively to reform language. Action 39: States commit to improving the Security Council in the areas of representation, inclusiveness, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, democracy and accountability. It highlights the importance of correcting the historical injustice towards Africa and ensuring more representation of underrepresented areas and groups (United Nations General Assembly, 2024). Action 40 requires more to be done in the intergovernmental negotiations. This wording has significance in three respects. Firstly, it transforms the conflict from one claimant in the region to one of priority, based on historical injustice. Second, it links representation to institutional legitimacy as opposed to viewing enlargement as a regional concession. Third, it sets a standard for future negotiations. African diplomats are able to use language that was agreed to by the entire General Assembly and that lessens the scope for opponents to deny the premise of underrepresentation.



The Pact does not, however, address any distributive concerns. It doesn't specify a form of states, numbers, veto rights, selection process or a time frame for amendment. It is consensus language, and contains a number of reform preferences, enabling states to state the principle without objecting to a design. This document does not contain a legal veto, only a political one. The effectiveness of its impact will depend on the follow-through in intergovernmental negotiations and how much the African position can get partners on-board for a ready text Charter.

2.4 Common African Position

The Ezulwini Consensus is a secure collective mandate for Africa. It considers the continent's permanent membership as a historical injustice and demands for not less than two permanent and five non-permanent seats. It also gives the AU the power to choose African representatives. This transparency helps prevent bilateral offers that could divide states or push the claim to symbolic presence from upending the negotiating coalition. The C-10, headed by Sierra Leone, is the body to do advocacy work and updates on the position. Being united is a resource, being rigid can have opportunity costs. Reform should be agreed with actors outside the region, and a position should be defined what is principles, and what is negotiable modalities. The principle of equal status may be a modality, timing of veto reform, rotation, review clauses and selection procedures may be modalities. The justice claim is something that African inclusion supporters can agree with, even if they don't agree with the proposal. If it is lost too early, Africa will be permanently in second class and core equality will be in danger. The African Model that was sent in April 2026 is significant, as it shifts from statements to text. It's not an answer that's made somewhere else, it's a model that's owned by African institutions, put on the table during the intergovernmental negotiations. Model presentation is an intermediate step, though. It still needs to get knit together with other models, to be expressed in Charter language and supported by a ratification coalition.

2.5 Coalition Politics and Permanent-Member Consent

Reform is a problem of collective action of collective-action problems. African states should make sure they coordinate amongst themselves, then agree amongst the wider membership of the UN and finally obtain all ratifications from the permanent members. Each level has different strategies that are rewarded. Continental unity is more likely to be principled clarity, cross-regional coalition-building is more likely to be a package deal, and permanent-member consent is more likely to be protection of incumbent interests. The proposal can be a success at one level and a failure at another.

Public endorsements are therefore not a good measure of support. The United Kingdom and France have supported the idea of having permanent African representation and the United States has agreed to two permanent African seats, 2024 (United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2024). The offers include veto power, who should be sitting in the seats (in this instance, designated states or regionally accountable arrangements), etc. China and Russia are consistently supplying a stronger African voice and are being judicious about institutions. The United States announcement was a "non-proposal," said the Wilson Center analysis, because it failed to mention selection, veto or a way to amend. Other areas must be engaged in the coalition building process. Besides Africa's priority claim, the Pact covers Latin America and the Caribbean states, and underrepresentation of Asia-Pacific and Arab states. So, there are reform packages linked to each other: States can support Africa, but they have to vote to add their representation preferences. The political challenge is to ensure that the African case does not get washed out by the universal package, and that it is the basis for a legitimate settlement based on African correction.

2.6 Empirical Review

The empirical evidence presented in the Pact shows that there is evidence of durable agenda-setting of African issues, but also a lack of institutional conversion. This is a remarkable achievement for the 2005 Common African Position (CAP) which managed to overcome several leadership changes and repeated cycles of negotiations in a diverse 54 states UN group. African elected members also established coordination bodies, called A3, to represent common positions in the Council. Smaller states can influence the drafting, can form coalitions and have procedural expertise without veto power, studies of elected member agency show. These practices represent operational agency, and do not tackle permanent exclusion.

In 2024 political momentum has increased. On 24 May, the AU's first consultation with African civil-society organisations on the Common African Position, which aimed to increase participation and communication, took place. Sierra Leone took the Council presidency to hold a high-level discussion on "Addressing the historical injustice and strengthening the effective representation of Africa" on 12 August. The speakers attributed the continent's cumbersome peace and security agenda to the absence of a permanent seat at the African Union Peace and Security Department and the United Nations Security Council (African Union Peace and Security Department, 2024; United Nations Security Council, 2024). The sequence is purposeful forum use, African actors connected continental mobilisation, Council agenda control and the Summit of the Future.



The Pact was adopted in September 2024, which resulted in a concrete normative outcome. It did not just restate the general pledge to equitable representation but it referred to the historical injustice of Africa and accorded it a priority. That accomplishment is tantamount to discursive and agenda-setting agency. It also included broader support including comments from the Secretary-General and by a few permanent members. However, it was this same time period that revealed the distinction between endorsement and design. Presence with hierarchy: The U.S. backed two permanent African seats but was against additional vetoes.

In 2025, the AU was in a process of consolidation. The full representation in the permanent and non-permanent categories was reiterated and unity was sought to be maintained at Assembly Decision 923 (African Union, 2025). The outcome document, draft AU model, and concise negotiating language/communiqué for the engagement on the eighty General Assembly was a result of C-10 ministerial work in Lusaka. It was a radical departure from repetition of the norm to institutional engineering. It also revealed the issues which had been postponed by the declarations: the seat formula, veto equality, selection of states and relations with competing reform bodies.

The pivotal procedural step was taken on 7 April 2026 when the co-chairs of the intergovernmental negotiations shared the African Model with the delegations at the UN. The model focused meetings and revised elements paper were then the subject of negotiations. The suggestion of Africa is offered for comparison for the first time in the period, not just as a principle. This helped to improve awareness of ownership and bargaining. But no single negotiating text was adopted and the General Assembly agreed in July to resume the process during its 81st session (United Nations General Assembly, 2026).

There are three conclusions that are restated throughout the evidence. Stronger language and recognition of a model is explained by African unity and the use of institutional fora strategically. Permanent members' support is qualified, particularly when it comes to veto extension. Finally, the intergovernmental-negotiation form gives a gradual incorporation without a specific date for resolution. The empirical record thus does not indicate either a story of African powerlessness or a story of imminent reform. It is a process that is subjected to growing influence and at the same time structurally restricted.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study is an amalgamation of the African agency theory and historical institutionalism. African agency theory is about the development of preferences, coalition formation, use of forum and ability to change external agendas (Brown & Harman, 2013; Coffie & Tiky, 2021). It does not take a monolithic view of Africa, rather it considers the AU Assembly, C-10, African Group, elected African Council members and individual states. Agency is measured according to the following concrete outcomes: recognition of African languages, formal submission of proposals, moves in other actors' position and institutional change.

Historical institutionalism is used to account for the fact that such outputs do not necessarily go as far as reform. The distribution of permanent seats in 1945 brought increasing benefits to the veto holders: they got to build up diplomatic contacts, procedural advantages, and the ability to approve subsequent amendments. The membership was raised from 11 to 15 in 1965 but elected representation remained the same. Path dependence does not, however, preclude reform, but does increase the coalition and sequencing required for reform (Pierson, 2000; Thelen, 1999).

The approaches, together, distinguish between actors' efforts and institutional outcomes. African diplomacy can be effective and impactful without having to re-distribute immediately as in the current rules. Conversely, the structural barriers must not be used as an excuse for not determining models or setting up coalitions. The questions raised by the merged framework are how and where African actors are able to capitalize on the opportunities it gives and where inherited veto points are exercised.

3. RESEARCH GAP AND PROPOSITIONS

Numerous scholarly studies have been written about the justice of the African cause, the content of the Ezulwini Consensus or the problem of Council reform in general. Less work is done to isolate the post-Pact period, and agency is measured across different stages – language to Charter change. If you define success as everything that is supportive, you won't see the absence of new authority and if you define failure as everything that is not amendment, you won't see the impact of Africa on the agenda and the nature of the negotiation. This study is designed to fill this gap, and will be process sensitive, ending in September 2026.

The analytical expectation is that coordinated actors can obtain more in the way of concessions of both a normative and procedural nature at a lower cost than can changes in entrenched rules. Substantive redistribution requires an expansion of the actor coalition beyond the claimants and a coalition that meets the incumbent veto holders' requirements. The statements below are used to guide the evidence assessment.



Proposition 1: The Pact for the Future increased African agency by converting the language of historical injustice into an agreed global reform priority and by enabling the Common African Position to enter model-based negotiations, but this agency produced primarily normative and procedural gains rather than a redistribution of Security Council authority between 2024 and 2026.

Proposition 2: Substantive African representation will remain blocked unless the African Union converts continental unity into a cross-regional coalition around a Charter-amendment model that reconciles the Ezulwini demand for veto equality with the preferences of the permanent members and other reform groups.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design: Qualitative, systemic and narrative design is used. It paints a picture of the interaction between African institutions and the evolution of the preferences of the permanent members of the General Assembly in the reform process between January 2024 and 12 September 2026. "Systemic" suggests that things are considered and treated as stages, with continental preference formation leading to UN agenda-setting, which then leads to model bargaining, which is then ratified through the Charter.

4.2 Sources of Data: The main sources are the Pact for the Future, the UN Charter, Security Council Meeting Records and Practice Summaries, General Assembly intergovernmental-negotiation materials, AU Assembly decisions, C-10 and Peace and Security Department documents and official statements of states. Conceptual and contextual evidence is available via peer reviewed research and credible policy analysis. Items were selected if they referred to some kind of African demand, if they indicated a change in the status of the process, if they expressed support or opposition, or if they indicated a legal threshold. Where claims involved dates or outcomes of institutions, official records were used.

4.3 Coding and Indicators Document coding was done in four phases of outcomes: discursive recognition, access to the agenda, bargaining movement, and constitutive change. The explanatory codes used were: continental unity, specificity of the proposal, support from other regions, consent of the permanent members, veto treatment, selection rules and procedural delay. Evidence of agency required there be a measurable connection between the African activity and a product. The only way for constitutional success to be achieved would be by an adopted and ratified Charter amendment or an equivalent legal seat redistribution.

4.4 Analytical Procedure and Limitations: Within period process tracing is used to test the story line in line with the sequence in each proposition. It looks at public statements in the light of the formal procedural outcomes and at other explanations, such as a general reform trend and strategic re-positioning by the permanent members. The study is limited in its coverage of the diplomatic bargaining because of the confidentiality of the negotiations and the fact that the negotiations are continuous. Often, public statements are misleading and September 2026 does not indicate failure. Conclusions therefore refer to what has been demonstrated and what is known at the time, not to what is preferred or what may be the case in the future.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Normative and Procedural Agency after the Pact

The evidence is in support of the first proposition. African diplomacy contributed to the shift from the representation issue being a persistent regional demand to an accepted global priority. In August 2024, Sierra Leone's presidency of the Security Council was intentionally used to bring historical injustice to the very eyes of the Security Council. This debate related representation to the day-to-day activities of the Council regarding African conflicts and missions. It also established a link between the Common African Position and the discussions on the Summit of the Future. This was an agency by an elected African member, who through a temporary institutional role, influenced the question that was discussed by permanent members.

The Pact then provided a normative gain. It was not a self-executing commitment to correct the historical injustice of Africa, but it did limit legitimate disagreement. Even if states were to reject the amount or kinds of seats, it was more difficult to deny the need for priority correction of the exclusion of the continent. The historical-injustice frame also placed the burden of explanation. Delay was now a problem for the opponents of reform, who had embraced a promise by their governments. It is a very significant means of influence, even if it does not immediately result in redistribution. The agency of Africa was not the agency of one government, but collective. The AU Assembly retained the mandate, the C-10 coordinated advocacy, the African Group advocated agreed positions in New York and civil-society consultation increased public ownership. The set-up was to enable various actors to perform on different levels. A long-standing problem with the intergovernmental negotiations was that the positions took a thematic form, making them hard to compare, but this was overcome by the C-10's later production of the African Model. In April 2026, Africa became a part of a model through formal transmission in the process.

Table 1. Post-Pact milestones in African agency and Security Council reform, 2024–2026

Date	Development	Agency significance	Institutional limit
24 May 2024	AU–civil society consultation on the Common African Position	Broadens African ownership beyond governments.	Participation does not settle Charter design.
12 Aug. 2024	Security Council high-level debate led by Sierra Leone	Moves historical injustice into the Council chamber.	Debate produces no binding reform decision.
22 Sept. 2024	Pact for the Future adopted	Makes redressing Africa's historical injustice a stated priority.	Political commitment remains outside the Charter.
15–16 Feb. 2025	AU Assembly reaffirms the Ezulwini Consensus	Preserves a single continental negotiating mandate.	Veto equality and seat selection remain contentious.
Sept. 2025	C-10 adopts the Lusaka Outcome and draft AU model	Translates principle into more operational negotiating language.	Other reform groups retain incompatible models.
7 Apr. 2026	African Model formally transmitted to IGN co-chairs	Places an African-authored model in the UN process.	No consensus text or formal negotiations follow automatically.
28 July 2026	General Assembly continues intergovernmental negotiations	Keeps Africa's model and reform agenda procedurally alive.	Rollover confirms movement without institutional settlement.

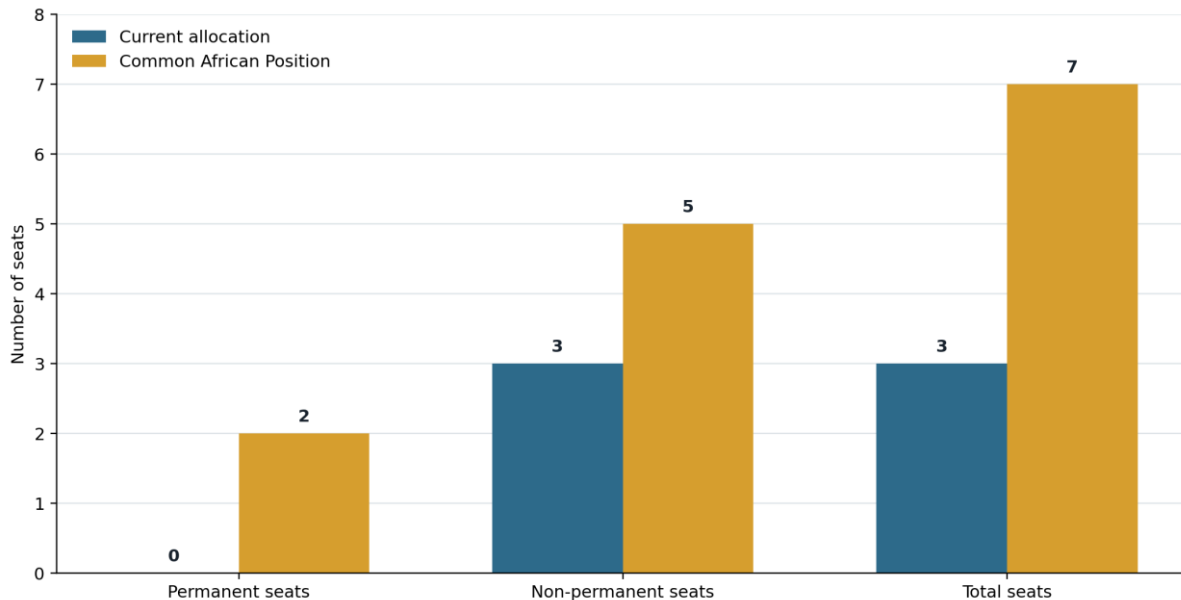
Source: Authors' synthesis from African Union and United Nations documents, 2024–2026.

Table 1 shows that there was a change over the processes. This led to the gradual inclusion of this process, which culminated in the inclusion of the claim in the Council's high-level agenda in August 2024, the Pact universalising the language of priority in September 2024, decisions made at AU and the Lusaka process consolidating this in 2025, and in the formal circulation of the African Model for the UN in April 2026. There was a gradual progression toward greater ownership, specificity and/or procedural standing. But no one action changed the make-up of the Council. The rollover in July 2026 is a case in point, as it included the new model and was open-ended.

The institutional result is in line with the difference between agenda-setting and constitutive agency. As of September 2026, the three elected seats in Africa remained unfilled and the permanent seat was still unfilled. No amendment was made to Article 23 and no new veto right had been agreed, no timetable had been agreed. The rules

governing decision were not altered but the content and legitimacy of debate was defined by the African claim. This isn't an easy task – process positioning can be a sum game and have a bearing on future negotiations. Nevertheless, it is a different result than representation.

Figure 1. Africa's representation gap in the Security Council.



Source: Authors' comparison based on Article 23 of the UN Charter and the Common African Position (African Union, 2005; United Nations, 1945).

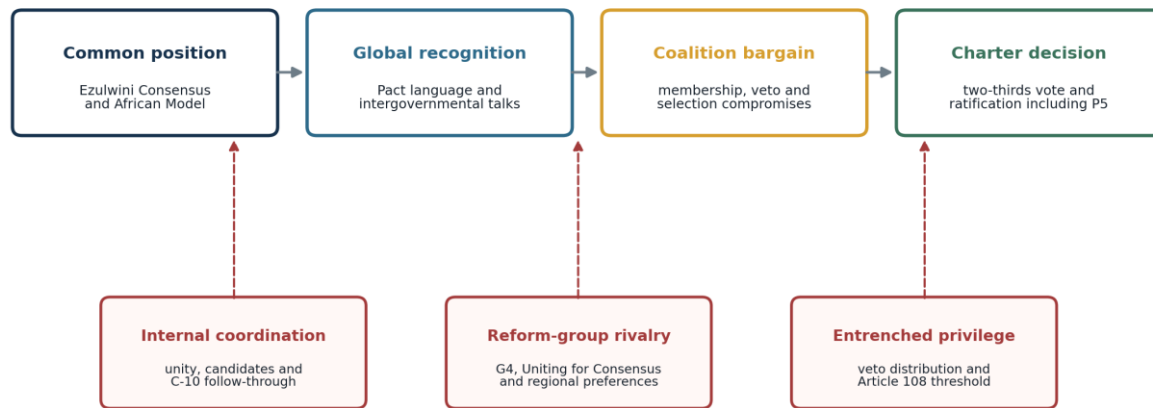
It is only natural to assume that a position like the Common African Position (CAP) would want to see a different Africa than the one depicted in the figure 1 below. Today, Africa has no fixed seat and usually three of the ten elected seats. The Ezulwini Consensus proposes for two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats, which would increase the number of African seats to seven. It's the four-seat numerical gain that doesn't matter as much as the fact that in the permanent category, continuity and veto power shape the agenda and bargaining. The comparison also explains why there should be no "supportive language": African selection and settlement of equal veto rights for new permanent members should be in the Charter.

5.2 Coalition and Institutional Limits

The second proposition is also supported by the evidence. An integral aspect of Article 108 is the coalition-building process. The fifty-four African votes on the UN are a significant voting block but not the two-thirds of the General Assembly necessary for adoption and all five permanent members of the UN have to ratify it. It turns those who are beneficiaries of the present distribution system into agents of the new distribution system. While moral legitimacy and numbers can raise the political costs of exclusion, they will not replace a deal which the current powers are willing to make.

Figure 2. From African agenda setting to Charter reform.

From African agenda-setting to constitutional reform



Recognition is necessary, but only coalition agreement and Charter ratification redistribute authority.

Source: Authors' analytical model based on African agency theory, historical institutionalism and Article 108 of the UN Charter

Figure 2 represents reform as a pathway that takes place in stages. The Common African Position provides collective preferences, the Pact and intergovernmental negotiations are providing global recognition and access to the agenda, and only two-thirds vote (and ratification – all 5 permanent members) in the General Assembly and ratification of the Charter can change the Charter - and inevitably, must reconcile categories of membership, selection and veto rules. Along the pathway there are 3 constraints. Inappropriate internal coordination can cause “water down” of the mandate, the reform forces can fail to obtain a supermajority, and incumbent privilege can hinder ratification process. The figure depicts the 2024-2026 result – Africa got recognition and model-presentation without opening the gates to the coalition and constitution to access redistributed power.

The boundary is demonstrated in the form of permanent member endorsements. The unprecedented two African permanent seats backed by the United States was a stark contrast to ambiguity, rejection of the veto rights, to full equality under the Ezulwini position (Reuters, 2024). British and French declarations welcome permanent representation in Africa; China and Russia favor greater representation in Africa. However, there is still no common P5 draft to come from the convergent rhetoric. If the veto competence and institution choice of candidates and timing of implementation are not explicitly specified, the word “permanent” can have different institutional connotations.

Another limitation is provided by competing reform organizations. A coalition of Charter amendment needs to put together states that want to retain the national permanent seats, states that want to expand by election and areas that want to correct on their own. Hence it matters to have a good package design. It might be difficult to put together an amendment to address only Africa, and an all-region package might be too large, too burdensome, or too divisive, if other claimants see that as a way to stall their interests. African negotiators need to have a plan that will give priority to historical injustice and offer tangible benefits to other groups.

Internal unity is yet to be needed, but it has to mature in agreed implementation. With this Common African Position, the AU's choice is to pick its own people. That leaves collective authority intact, whilst at the same time delaying a politically sensitive decision. The population, regional location, diplomatic capacity and financial contribution and commitment to AU positions of potential claimants would vary. Partners could have guarantees that permanent African membership is governable and legitimate in a transparent selection process (e.g. designated seats, regional balance, review and continental accountability). Always avoiding the question gives excuse to the outsiders of the question to delay it.

To overcome the veto problem, sequenced diplomacy is needed. Seats offered and accepted immediately with less than equal rights would be lesser permanence. Perhaps all P5 members can symbolically back Africa at the time of expansion and reject the sole acceptable draft. The principle of equality can be respected during the negotiation of transitional arrangements, mandatory review clauses or veto restraint in a credible strategy. These should not be 'homemade' by individual candidates and should be sanctioned as a group.



Intergovernmental-negotiation format is about incrementalism. Since it is consensus oriented and has no specific deadline, recognition, meetings, elements paper can accumulate without a vote. Formal transmission of the African Model is added to the record that negotiations can be conducted on, but is not a requirement for text-based negotiations. The July 2026 continuation decision is therefore a success and is an alert: Africa's model is in the process and the process can be continued without a decision.

A result of the findings is that they improve both theories. African agency is expressed in issue framing and institutional entrepreneurship and model production, while the final authority is reserved. Historical institutionalism provides an explanation for why this influence leads to layered change, that is, new language and procedures are added on top of a durable Charter core. During the interaction, strategy is also revealed. Agency is most important in conjunction with continental legitimacy, technical specificity and external coalition incentives. The institution may be able to see injustice and keep going if any one of these three is missing.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

Africa was given a greater voice in the politics of Security Council reform, albeit not a permanent seat on the Security Council, between 2024 and September 2026. African actors shaped the language of historical injustice, selected members to initiate a pivotal debate and brought the Common African Position and an African draft model to the intergovernmental negotiations. These are measurable process/outcome achievements. They counter depictions of Africa as only being offered schemes cooked up by more powerful states.

The period also demonstrates the shortcomings of the agency. The Pact did not specify seats, nor was the African Model an agreed negotiating document, and the July 2026 decision not a final decision. The General Assembly has supermajority and each permanent member has the power of final decision under Article 108. The way towards substantive success is, therefore, to be united at the continental level, and to enforce credible rules of selection and a negotiated approach to the veto and a cross-regional package. The difficulty in Africa is no longer how to show that exclusion is wrong, but how to make exclusion constitutional.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is a need to translate the African Model to draft Charter language. C-10 should be given the opportunity to publish article-by-article amendment language on Council size/ seat categories, election/designation, veto competence, and entry into force. Measuring support within a legal text reduces the room for principle support to the reform.
2. There is need to create a selection system for Africans. Before the creation of seats, the AU should focus on eligibility criteria, regional-balance rules, terms of accountability and review procedures. The structure should be both efficient and viable, in terms of permanent representation, and should be at the same time owned in a collective sense by the Africans.
3. Equality should be the target and the transition options, clauses and overall commitment to veto-restraint should be examined collectively for Africa. The flexibility needs to be given by the AU and not as a two-sided offer.
4. There is need to form a coalition of amendments for across the region. African diplomacy should be trying to discover an acceptable means in the Caribbean, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, small states and other under-represented areas. Africa should be well represented in a compact reform package that ensures its top priority without being so large as to violate the General Assembly rules.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Additional research could also be done on a comparison between the confidential accounts and the public positions, to find out where the coalitions bargains are missing. There is also a need for research to model alternative African selection and veto mechanisms, to assess the impact of the A3 on the output of the Council, and to monitor if the African Model gets consolidated as negotiating text in the 81st General Assembly. Interviews in the various subregions of Africa would reveal to what degree a sense of "African unity" is actually a disciplined restraint on competition among candidates or common preferences.

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