

AT THE HIGH TABLE: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON INDIA'S U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL WIN

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: UNO and its various Agencies

[India's election to the U.N. Security Council](#) as a non-permanent member is a significant diplomatic victory for the country, which has long been pushing for reforms at global institutions. The victory wasn't unexpected as India was the only contestant for the Asia Pacific seat. But the Indian foreign policy establishment took no chances as the election would be done by secret ballot at the UN General Assembly and two-thirds of the votes were needed for victory. India secured the seat with 184 votes in the 193-strong General Assembly. Mexico, Norway and Ireland were also elected as non-permanent members. While Mexico won the Latin American seat uncontested, Norway and Ireland emerged victorious from a three-way contest for the Western Europe and Others Group seat. Canada failed to win enough votes in this group. Neither Kenya nor Djibouti, which were contesting the seat from Africa, won a two-thirds majority. They will face another vote. India sought the support of member countries by highlighting its commitment to multilateralism and reforms. Ahead of the vote, India had launched a campaign brochure which highlighted its demand for transparency in mandates for UN peacekeeping missions and push for the India-led Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, and called for joint efforts for UN reform and expansion of the Security Council. A "new orientation for a reformed multilateral system" (NORMS), as laid out by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, would be India's overall objective during the two-year tenure that will begin next year.

Achieving this would depend on how India will conduct diplomacy in the global body, build alliances and raise issues that go beyond the interests of the big five. India has long been of the view that the structure of the UN Security Council doesn't reflect the realities of the 21st century. It has also got increasing support from member countries for its push for reforms. But the five permanent members of the Security Council have resisted these attempts. The COVID-19 pandemic has already shaken up the global order and sharpened the rivalry between the U.S. and China. It has also opened up fresh debates on strengthening multilateralism and multilateral institutions. In this context, the challenges before India are many. The Security Council is one of the most important multilateral decision-making bodies where the contours of global geopolitics are often drawn. India should avoid the temptation of taking sides at a time when the Security Council is getting more and more polarised. To serve its interests and push for its agenda of multilateralism and reforms, India should adopt value-based positions that are not transactional, aspire for the leadership of the non-permanent members of the Council and be the voice of the weaker nations.

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