

Swaraj calls for permanent UNSC seats for India, Africa

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NEW DELHI: Ahead of the IndiaAfrica summit, external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj made joint cause with the continent in pushing for reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The support of 54 African countries is crucial for India's plans to become a permanent member in the UNSC. Making a strong pitch for the reform of the body, Swaraj said on Sunday it was "inconceivable" and "incomprehensible" that India and the African continent did not have permanent representation in the UNSC. Preparations for the summit on October 29 will begin with the senior officers' meeting on Monday.

Swaraj said neither Africa nor India had permanent UNSC membership. "A major issue is UNSC reforms. The council continues to be representative of a world order of 1945. It is inconceivable that it does not have any permanent representation from Africa, which is the largest continent in terms of number of countries," she said. "It is also incomprehensible that India, which represents almost one-sixth of the world's population and has all credentials to be a permanent member of the council, is still out of it. We all need to work together to remove this anomaly and the media has an important role in it," Swaraj said in her inaugural address at the third India-Africa Editors Forum. The minister said developing countries had to work 'hand-in-hand' in two critical areas – climate change and world trade – in the form of Conference of Parties (COP)-21 on Climate Change in Paris and the 10th WTO Ministerial in Kenya in December this year.