



INTERVENTION BY AMBASSADOR H.S. PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE UN DURING THE INFORMAL PLENARY MEETING : EXCHANGE 1 OF THE SECOND ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND RELATED MATTERS AT THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON MAY 26, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

As I am speaking for the first time in this forum, so ably presided over by you, I would like to begin by appreciating your skillful efforts in conducting these negotiations through a very comprehensive first round. I would also like to thank you for your overview of the first round of the negotiations.

Your efforts deserve both the appreciation and gratitude of the members of this forum.

Anyone who is entrusted the task of guiding a process that seeks real change, that seeks to forge ahead despite a few who secretly desire just the opposite, is bound to elicit both bouquets and brickbats.

This is not new, and only serves to confirm that at last, we are perhaps inching towards genuine negotiations, rather than the endless process of statements in the Open-Ended Working Group.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate our unflinching support for your tireless efforts.

There are some amongst us who would like you to merely replicate the OEWG process, or generate activity with the repetition of the same arguments of the first round, so that they can then claim that we are making progress. Any attempt to seriously move the process forward, or to attempt new approaches, is seen as a threat to their real and unstated desire to perpetuate the status quo.

If the status quo were representative, effective, responsive or fair, we could have lived with it. But as is clear to all, this is not the case, and the UNSC is in urgent need for reform.

Hence, my delegation would urge you not to be disheartened in your efforts. Real change comes only when people rise above the ordinary, and do not get tempted to take the path of least resistance. We have the fullest confidence that you, Mr. Chairman, will persevere towards real change.

And this real change must involve greater representation for Africa on the UNSC, including in the permanent membership.

It is, therefore, important that you carefully note the difference between the response of the African Group, and that of the others.

During the first round, the African Group, like most other delegations, had highlighted their preference for an expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories. They had also reiterated other demands of the Ezulwini consensus, including the right of veto for new permanent members.

Their primary concern with the overview, as eloquently stressed by many African countries, is the preeminence the overview gives to the intermediate approach.

Naturally, they do not want the way forward to proceed in a direction that goes against the expressed desire of the overwhelming majority. Thus, their suggestions appear to suggest a constructive approach, with the objective of fully incorporating the African position in the overview.

On the other hand, a few countries have focused on criticizing your efforts from a completely negative perspective. All they can suggest instead is to repeat the practices and procedures of the past, knowing fully well that this will not take the process forward. We must reject such notions outright.

We are also surprised at the vituperative attack on your efforts as a facilitator on the grounds that yours is a limited mandate, etc.

Clearly, such concerns did not deter those delegations that now adopt a critical attitude from warmly welcoming the facilitators' reports in the past, when such reports appeared to argue more explicitly for an intermediate approach despite the overwhelming support for an expansion in both categories. Even last Friday, one delegation of that group was trying to argue in support of such an approach.

We must avoid such cherry-picking. My delegation appeals for consistency in our responses. Without this, mutual trust, so often quoted by some as indispensable, cannot exist.

At this juncture, Mr. Chairman, let me clarify that we, too, are neither entirely comfortable nor entirely satisfied with the overview. Our preference would have been for an overview that conveyed clearly the 'sense of the house' during the first round of negotiations, particularly with regard to identifying the issues that enjoy support from the overwhelming majority of Member States.

As one African delegation correctly argued last Friday, a proposal that enjoys the support of 53 countries cannot be placed at the same level as that supported by one country. In the same vein, the proposal for expansion in permanent and non-permanent membership, which enjoys overwhelming support, should have been explicitly highlighted.

Nevertheless, we stand ready and will engage constructively in this process and will work with the overview presented by you which constitutes a good starting point for the second round of negotiations. If necessary, this could be expanded to include proposals that might not have been included. It would also be useful to quantify the support each proposal enjoyed in the first round.

Based on this, we would recommend that we now intensify our efforts, and move towards an outcome that *inter alia* includes proposals that enjoy wide support, including expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, improvement in working methods of the Council and on the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

Let me now turn to the issue of the review.

At the outset, allow me to also emphasize that we do not believe that the review should be looked at only in the context of the intermediate approach. As the G-4 proposal indicates, we see a review process in the context of an expansion in both permanent and non-permanent membership, as well as other reforms that we may agree to.

India has steadfastly emphasized the importance of the UNSC reflecting contemporary world realities. This is crucial also to ensuring its legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness.

In fact, the fundamental basis and motivation for our work is that the UNSC continues to reflect the world of 1945, rather than the world of today.

It is, therefore, crucial that we institute a robust process of review of the UNSC as part of the reforms that we undertake. Moreover, such a review must be mandatory.

Article 109 of the UN Charter visualized a General Conference to review the Charter within 10 years after its adoption. This never materialized.

We believe that a strong review mechanism would also go a long way to allay the fears of some delegations against locking out further reform.

Against this background, we would propose a review after 15 years from the date of entry into force of the amendments.

This should be comprehensive, looking at all aspects of the UNSC.

In this context, we would also look favourably at the concept of periodic reviews, say every 15 years. This would ensure that the UNSC continues to reflect realities as prevalent.

We would be willing to engage in discussions on the concept of challenge to permanent members provided the bar for such a challenge is commensurate with and not less than the bar for permanent membership of the UNSC.

In the spirit of interactivity, allow me also to respond to some of the comments made during the debate.

One phrase used repeatedly by a small group is flexibility. They reiterate how they have been flexible whilst no one else has demonstrated such flexibility. Let me respond briefly. In reality, the flexibility they espouse is anchored on one real position i.e. there should be no new permanent members.

It is important to understand this, and once we look at their proposals from this perspective, it is abundantly clear that far from showing any flexibility, they have not moved an iota. Let us, therefore, be wary and not get carried away by repeated assertions of flexibility.

Before concluding, permit me also to refer to a reference made by one delegation on the reasons for his country not joining the L.69 Group. Whilst I am not personally aware of any invitation having been extended, naturally each country is free to join, or not, any grouping. I am both reassured and delighted to note the importance the L.69 Group evokes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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