

STATEMENT
by Vitaly Churkin, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to
the UN, at the UN General Assembly Unofficial
Plenary Meeting on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase
in the Membership of the
Security Council and Related Matters

26 May 2009

Mr. President,

We are grateful to you for convening today's informal plenary meeting of the General Assembly, which marks the beginning of the second round of the intergovernmental talks on the UN Security Council reform. We also have taken note of your letter of 18 May, which contains the Overview of the first round of the negotiating process.

We regret to note that the overview does not reflect the view expressed on numerous occasions by some Security Council permanent members, in particular, Russia on the need to preserve intact the prerogatives of the current permanent members of the Council, including the veto power. Nor does it take into account their position on the working methods of the Security Council. The overview lacks clarity on procedural questions, especially in the context of any review or 'challenge'. We believe those shortcomings should be remedied.

The overview clearly states that it is merely a point of departure and reference for the second round and does not supplant the substantive underpinning of the negotiations set forth in UN General Assembly Decision 62/557. We believe that decision as to what can be regarded as the underpinning of the negotiations should be made by Member States themselves.

As regards the immediate issues before us today – the agenda, timing and frequency of any review, it is too early to discuss them. In our view, the review is an element of the 'interim' model. Therefore, it would be logical to address those

issues directly after (and if) the Member States have made a fundamental choice in favour of the ‘interim’ model.

At the same time, some elements of a future review are obvious to us even now. Those include preserving the compact nature of the expanded Security Council so as to ensure its adequate and prompt response to arising challenges.

As regards the veto power, we should speak not about banning or limiting its use by the current Security Council permanent members – their prerogatives should remain unchanged regardless of the reform model chosen – but about the prospects of conferring that right on possible new Security Council members if UN Member States agree on expanding the Council in both categories.

The issue of Security Council working methods should be removed from the list of major issues of the Security Council reform after Member States have reached a package agreement on the Council reform during the intergovernmental talks. In other words, the working methods of the SC should be excluded from the issues subject to review.