



STATEMENT BY MR. HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, AT THE
INFORMAL MEETING OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY PLENARY ON THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF EQUITABLE
REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY
COUNCIL AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO THE COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 02, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for your dedicated efforts as Chair of our inter-governmental negotiations on this important issue.

Let me place on record our satisfaction at the fact that these negotiations are finally focusing on the reform model that clearly enjoys the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States.

This is a step in the right direction, even though it has taken years of going around in circles in the open-ended working group. Even in these negotiations, we have spent far too much time avoiding this issue rather than dealing with it directly.

Unfortunately, even today, there are some amongst us whose principal objective in attending these meetings sometimes seems solely to ensure that there be no progress whatsoever, either today or in any meeting that substantively discusses expansion in both categories of membership of the Security Council.

Some of these colleagues have even criticized your decision to hold today's meeting on the specious argument that this represents a "selective" choice of one of the five key issues. It is hard to find merit in this somewhat self-serving claim. The fact is that today's discussions are on the model with expansion in both current membership categories. Naturally, the details of this model, and its variations, obviously encompass all the five key issues, for instance as in the G-4 proposal. Moreover, this model also represents an integrated approach to all five key issues, which has been a repeated demand of these very colleagues.

Therefore, to these distinguished colleagues of mine, the naysayers, I would say: do not remain on the wrong side of history. It is evident that we are at a juncture where the prospects of substantive reform of the Security Council are visible. To remain in this negative mould only defers the inevitable; it does not change it.

It is essential that we collectively promote this process, to ensure that the desire of the vast majority of the membership of this Organization for genuine reform can be fulfilled.

In this effort, Mr. Chairman, you have a key role to play. You have correctly, and courageously, noted that today's topic has commanded the most support. It is only logical therefore that henceforth, we focus our attention on this model alone, and not on other options that do not command the support of more than a handful of States.

While this is obvious to most of us, it would perhaps have been more accurate to state that this model enjoys the support of an overwhelming majority, and that it is only a handful of countries that persist in their opposition to this model. If we are to have a serious negotiation aimed at reaching substantive conclusions in the near future, we should focus our attention ahead, and not revisit old and discredited arguments.

Mr. Chairman,

Permit me to digress for a moment to refer to a few intriguing comments that I heard in the pre-lunch from some colleagues, who defy both empirical fact and recent developments to question the level of support enjoyed by the reform model with expansion in both categories of membership.

Despite the fact that I learnt my mathematics in the land that introduced the concept of zero to the world, I confess to being baffled by the new system of mathematics that these colleagues seem to use. The issue is simple – only 12, or at best 15, delegations have ever objected to an expansion in the permanent membership. The rest, even the P-5, have not objected, not once, in repeated rounds of open negotiations, or even in the OEWG process that preceded it.

Yet, using specious and wordy arguments, this tiny minority would have us believe that most delegations are not in favour of expanding the UNSC in both categories.

Mr Chairman,

Listening to these specious arguments, I utilized the lunch break to look for inspiration. I found it in Lewis Carroll's classic work, "*Through the Looking Glass...*". With your permission, Mr. Chairman, let me quote you some inspiring passages from this classic work:

*"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax--
Of cabbages--and kings--
And why the sea is boiling hot--
And whether pigs have wings."*

*"But wait a bit," the Oysters cried,
"Before we have our chat;*

*For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat!"
"No hurry!" said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that.*

There are several other inspiring pieces, Mr Chairman, but the reality is they, the minority, who are very well aware of the overwhelming support enjoyed by this model. They are equally aware of the fact that it is they who stand on the wrong side of the tide. Hence their vociferous objections, in the forlorn hope that stridency can substitute for a lack of numbers. If there is genuine doubt about the basic premise that most delegations support expansion in both categories, then, my knowledge of mathematics tells me that we should test the hypothesis scientifically. So, let me ask, why do they not want us to schedule a straw poll to ask who really objects to an expansion in both categories? I suspect the results would clearly demonstrate that this is a small minority. Perhaps this is already evident to them, hence their desire to avoid further highlighting their isolation.

I think there is little doubt in this hall, or elsewhere in the building, which model my delegation prefers.

Suffice therefore, for me to underline for the record that we see a need to increase the membership of the UN Security Council by 6 permanent and 4 non-permanent members. Two each of the new permanent members would be from Asia and Africa, and one each from Latin America and Europe. The four new non-permanent seats would be equally filled between Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. This was the proposal put forward by the G-4 in draft resolution A/59/L.64. It remains our preferred option.

Naturally, new permanent members would have rights and responsibilities on parallel with existing permanent members, including the right to the veto. However, they would not exercise the veto power until the question of the extension of the right of veto to new permanent members is decided through a review after 15 years from the date of entry into force of the reform measures.

Indeed, as various rounds of discussions demonstrate, this remains the most comprehensive proposal. It is also the tidiest. No other option comes remotely close to satisfying the varying concerns of the membership in this important issue.

Mr Chairman,

Clearly, today we no longer need to debate which model to follow. Instead, we should concern ourselves with the details of how to expand the membership of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories. Instead, we must discuss variants of this model tabled by several member states, for instance by the African Group, identify the most suitable option, and then discuss which variant to implement at the earliest.

We must carry out a rigorous evaluation of each variant of this broadly-acceptable model, and build up a package on which our views can converge.

Only then can we address the *leitmotif* of these negotiations: that the UNSC no longer represents the interests of the collective membership, and therefore cannot discharge its functions on behalf of all Members. Enhanced representation of developing countries is a crucial requirement in rectifying this unacceptable state of affairs.

Mr Chairman,

How should we proceed from here? The way forward is clear: we must begin work by identifying the various proposals made by delegations regarding ways of expanding membership of the Council in both categories. Thereafter, detailed negotiations can commence urgently.

We count on you, Mr. Chairman, to take us forward along this path. You can be assured that my delegation will extend the fullest support to you in an effort to focus our collective energies—and time—in negotiations on specific options for reform of the UN Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership.

Thank you

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)