

STATEMENT BY MR. S. M. KRISHNA, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2009



Your Excellency, Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please accept my congratulations on your assuming the Presidency of this 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. My delegation assures you of our fullest cooperation during your stewardship of this august Assembly that embodies the

hopes, aspirations and our shared vision of peace and development for all the people of our planet.

Mr. President,

When this General Assembly ends next year, the United Nations would have completed 65 years of existence. These past decades have seen the world change in fundamental ways. Connectivity defines our global condition, and the challenges that we collectively face are global. The resolution of these challenges, as we are aware, require global approaches and solutions. What may happen in one part of the world has an impact on other regions.

In the context of these rapidly emerging changes and their deep and diverse effect, we must introspect more deeply on whether the United Nations and other global governance structures are geared to effectively meet the challenges that confront us all.

It is of concern that even after more than six decades, international governance structures are neither inclusive nor participatory. Consequently, these structures and institutions have not kept pace or evolved, with the changed nature, the intensity and the depth of contemporary global issues. The question therefore is: are these institutions able enough to address these challenges either adequately or satisfactorily?

The reform and restructuring of the global governance architecture is the critical need of our times and the voice of the developing world, including the small island nations and of Africa, is of principal and core relevance, if we are to have truly participatory and global responses to global challenges.

One need not look too far to identify these challenges. The economic and financial turmoil, which did not begin in the developing world, has affected developing countries the most. Growth has slowed down with recession overtaking many countries. The international response to this challenge has to be not only the measures that have been taken to stimulate economies but more importantly, to find ways to restructure the current international governance system which has failed to respond to the virulence of the financial and economic crisis. To gloss over this structural deficit of the current global financial and economic architecture, would imperil the future of a vast majority of the peoples of this world and presage greater difficulties in the future.

In the face of the current economic and financial crisis, hard-won gains in alleviating poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease are being reversed. Today, the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals are seriously threatened. Policies of protectionism under these already adverse circumstances will exacerbate the serious situation that many countries face.

It is imperative that the United Nations act in concert to coherently overcome these challenges. India, which is actively engaged in the G-20 and other processes, has always stressed that developing countries must receive priority in any global response to the crisis.

The UN Conference on the financial and economic crisis held in June this year was opportune and provided a useful platform to collectively seek ways and means to respond to the crisis. We now look forward to an early implementation of the follow-up measures agreed to at the Conference, during the course of this General Assembly.

We believe that international trade and commerce has a central role to play in revitalizing global economic growth. We are committed to negotiations in the Doha Development Round. We strongly favour fair and equitable rule-based multilateral trade negotiations, which recognize and address the legitimate demands of the developing countries. India supports resumption of the negotiations at an early date and stands ready to engage with all WTO Members to complete the modalities and addressing any outstanding problems. To support this process, we also organized an international ministerial level conference in New Delhi on 3-4 September 2009.

Mr President,

At the centre-stage of multilateralism and international cooperation is the United Nations.

The UN is a platform where the world meets to express views and undertake commitments on global issues of mutual concern on an equal footing. No wonder then that the Charter of the United Nations begins with the inspiring words: "We the people of the United Nations....." Inclusiveness and collective action, in all aspects of the work of the organization is at the heart of its Charter. This vision must be our lodestar, the guiding principle of all we undertake. India is committed to working with member states to making the United Nations more relevant and tuned in to contemporary realities.

Reforming the United Nations is a matter of the utmost priority. Four years after the 2005 World Summit, there has not been much progress even as newer and more global crises and problems have emerged. We should not let slowness of action weaken the organization in the face of such challenges. Rather, we must work in concert to make it more robust and capable of effective response.

Reform in the three essentials of the Charter i.e. Peace and Security, Development, and Human Rights require our collective attention. The General Assembly must be revitalized in full measure and its role as the anvil of global deliberation must be strengthened. The ECOSOC must become the fulcrum of development. It must be accepted that the Security Council must be strengthened and made more representative by expanding its permanent and non-permanent membership. Ongoing

intergovernmental negotiations during the last six months have unambiguously established that an overwhelming majority of Member States share the perspective that expansion in both categories of membership of the Security Council is needed.

Mr. President,

Climate change is one of the most important global challenges that we face today. Developing countries bear a disproportionate share of its adverse effects even though they are not responsible for it. Cognizant of the serious threat that climate change poses, India is engaged in the ongoing negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change including in the upcoming Copenhagen Conference. India will work for an outcome that recognizes the development imperatives of developing countries and is rooted in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

We also have to move away from concentrating on 'mitigation' only and ensure that there is a focus on adaptation, which is critical for developing countries. We are hosting a high-level global conference on "Climate Change: Technology Development and Transfer" on October 22-23, 2009 in cooperation with the United Nations. The objective of this Conference is to help formulate a roadmap for technology in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation to support the UNFCCC process.

Developing countries must be supported financially, technologically and with capacity building resources so that they can cope with the immense challenges of adaptation. Special efforts are required to develop programmes that address the critical needs of Small Island States and of the most vulnerable countries.

Poverty alleviation and livelihood security are central imperatives for India. For this, accelerated economic growth and energy security are critical drivers. In pursuing our development goals, India has been successful in significantly reducing its energy intensity. India will continue to pursue this path.

India is aware that the continuing volatility in the fossil-fuel markets together with the threat of climate change which makes the development of all renewable and clean energy sources, including nuclear energy crucial. In this context, international civil-nuclear cooperation is important.

India has also taken several independent initiatives to address the issue of climate change. We have put in place a comprehensive policy and legislative framework as well as a National Action Plan on Climate Change with separate Eight National Missions. An unprecedented afforestation campaign has been launched with doubling of the budget for forestry this year to US\$ 1.3 billion and this increase is going to be sustained every year. The Prime Minister's Council has approved National Missions for Enhanced Energy Efficiency, and Solar Energy setting ambitious goals. We are

supporting and facilitating major research to assess various aspects related to climate change.

Mr. President

India attaches the highest priority to the goal of nuclear disarmament and has an impeccable non-proliferation record. We welcome the renewed global debate on achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. This corresponds with India's longstanding and consistent advocacy of nuclear disarmament as one of the highest priority of the international community. We have put forward a number of proposals on nuclear disarmament in the UN, including a Working Paper in 2006, proposing elements to fashion a new consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Last year, at the 63rd UNGA, consistent with India's longstanding commitment as articulated in the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan in 1988, India reiterated its proposal for a Nuclear Weapons Convention for banning the production, development, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and to provide for their complete elimination within a specified time-frame. The international nuclear order cannot be discriminatory. Further, states must fulfill the obligations they have undertaken. Once more, with feeling and with commitment, India reiterates that proposal.

We will continue to engage with key countries to intensify this debate with the hope that greater international understanding could lend itself to a firm commitment for action on nuclear disarmament.

It was in this spirit that we supported adoption of a Programme of Work, including on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, in the Conference on Disarmament in May this year. This is consistent with India's position, to work with others in the Conference on Disarmament towards conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilaterally negotiated and internationally verifiable FMCT, provided it meets India's national security interests.

We remain committed to a voluntary, unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing.

Mr. President,

India stands committed to the safeguarding of international peace and security. Over the past five decades, we contributed more than 100,000 peacekeepers and have suffered the highest number of casualties in these decades. Strengthening the normative basis for peacekeeping operations and giving major Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) a greater say, will serve to make peacekeeping more effective.

Mr. President,

The barbaric terrorist attack on the innocent people of Mumbai on November 26, 2008 reminds us of the daily and malignant menace that terrorism poses to all countries. There cannot be any justification whatsoever for such mindless terrorist acts. It is our collective responsibility and duty to work together to ensure that terrorists, organizers, perpetrators and supporters of such crimes are brought to justice.

To strengthen the international legal framework of the fight against terrorism, India had proposed a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). Discussions on the draft have gone on for far too long. It is time that the Convention be finally adopted. India earnestly calls upon all countries to make serious efforts in the next few weeks to arrive at a consensus on the text.

Mr. President,

Peace, security, stability and welfare of our neighbourhood is vital for India. There is a new beginning in Sri Lanka; in Nepal strengthening the peace process is in our collective interest; and in Afghanistan, the international community must remain intensively engaged and support its development efforts and the maintenance of peace and stability. India is committed to establishing good neighbourly relations and resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan through peaceful dialogue.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate India's steadfast commitment to the work of the United Nations. Speaking to this Assembly 41 years ago, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said and I QUOTE ".the United Nations is the trustee of the world's peace and represents the hopes of mankind. Its very existence gives a feeling of assurance that the justice of true causes can be brought fearlessly before the world. This Assembly and the agencies of the United Nations should, in all that they do, sustain those hopes and promote the causes of peace. UNQUOTE. The truth and conviction of these words are more meaningful today than ever before.

Thank you

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