

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR BHAGWANT S BISHNOI, ACTING
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT A PREPARATORY MEETING TO
THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATION ON 'QUESTION OF
EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE
MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND OTHER MATTERS
RELATED TO THE COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 11, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by first and foremost conveying our most sincere felicitations to you on your appointment as Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations in this historic 70th anniversary year of the United Nations. We would like to echo all that you said in your introductory remarks. I also acknowledge the presence, earlier in our meeting, of the President of the General Assembly. His presence was a powerful signal. We are heartened by the message.

As we collectively endeavor to make this institution “fit for purpose”, your appointment brings to this debate, the much needed fresh lease of life it needed, to inject momentum this stalled process needed for its resuscitation.

We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly H.E. Sam Kutesa for his visionary leadership, for having made this subject a key priority for his tenure, and for giving a clear mandate authorizing you the Chair to commence this round on the basis of a negotiation text.

Before I get into the substance of my remarks, allow me to first align myself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of St. Vincent & Grenadines, on behalf of the L.69, as well as with the distinguished Permanent Representative of Japan, on behalf of the G4. I would also like to convey my delegation’s fullest endorsement of the statement to be delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Guyana, on behalf of the CARICOM.

Mr. Chairman, in your letter of 16 January you had indicated that the objective of today’s meeting would be to “*exchange ideas on how to best structure our work, in preparation of the Intergovernmental Negotiations.*” We thank you for making clear that today’s meeting is not the IGN, but a preparatory informal meeting to exchange ideas on the structure of the upcoming negotiations.

We are all well aware that over the last seven years, we have engaged in one of the most peculiar processes that the United Nations has known. The process, while being known as Intergovernmental Negotiations, was conducted without the

basis of any text. It was confined to making statements, repeatedly of known positions, without any effort to narrow differences or find compromise language. It would be the only process of its kind in the United Nations where negotiations have been conducted by, as one of our colleagues had said in an earlier meeting, “shooting the breeze”. If I heard you correctly, you said it is the classic definition of madness.

Mr. Chairman,

We request you to begin negotiations on the basis of a concise text and not a compilation that has deliberately been made unwieldy in order to subvert the process. The objective of the preponderant majority is clear. To move forward and make progress. It is not to do nothing. Neither is it to tie ourselves in knots.

There may be a small minority, albeit vocal, which may question if the Chair has the authority to put forward a negotiating text.

My Chairman,

In every process that we have in the United Nations, the Chair prepares a negotiating text. This happened for the Sustainable Development Goals, it will happen for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It has happened for every Summit that we have held till now. It is only natural for the Chair to put forward a negotiating text. The opposite, in fact, would be unnatural.

Secondly, the President of the General Assembly has given guidance to the Chair on this matter. He has repeatedly gone on record, including today, to state that to progress further, there should be a text which can be negotiated. He has said so eloquently what most of us are saying. We salute him and thank him for providing clear guidance.

The mandate that has been given by the membership to the Chair of the IGN is also unambiguous. In December 2009, 140 member states submitted a signed letter asking the Chair to table a negotiation table. Even the Uniting for Consensus has today called for text based negotiation.

Mr. Chairman,

We may hear some delegations calling for consensus to emerge before a negotiation text. This is putting logic upside down. A negotiation text is meant to facilitate the emergence of consensus. If there already is consensus, why would we need a negotiating text? Mr. Chairman, many of us are aware of the model UN

that is practiced in numerous schools all over the world. Even they do not get it as wrong as this. I will not belabour this point any further Mr. Chairman.

2015 is a landmark year for the organization. It is the 70th anniversary of its establishment. It is also 10 years since our Heads of States and Governments unanimously called for the early reform of the Security Council. This is a year for decisive action. For us, an 11th round of the IGN with business like the earlier rounds basis would not be acceptable. We would then find it very difficult to meaningfully engage with the process.

Mr. Chairman,

We are also of the view that there is adequate guidance already available on what the negotiating text should look like. It should, quite obviously, cover the five clusters of issues spelt out in GA decision 62/557. We join a large number of delegations in suggesting, from a practical point of view, that it be in the language and form of a GA resolution. That would clearly bring out areas of convergence and divergence as well. In addition, as mentioned earlier, a concise text would be most useful.

Mr. Chairman,

We would request that the first meeting of the IGN be held before the end of the month. Thereafter, meetings should be held once a week so that the text can be negotiated, para by para, and, line by line.

Mr. Chairman,

You have the full confidence of my delegation. We are happy to see you at the helm of this process. We are confident that your leadership will be purposeful and decisive. From our side, you have the flexibility and space that you require.

Thank you.