

Intervention by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the informal meeting (closed) of the 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 14 December 2010, New York.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by welcoming the decision of Ambassador Zahir Tanin, the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform for his decision to convene this meeting today. His letter of 24 November has encouraged and provided us with a faint ray of hope on the way ahead and possibly some light at the end of the tunnel.

The time for decisive action is at hand.

The UN membership has been in intergovernmental negotiations since March 2009. With each passing day, the distressing realization that an unreformed Security Council reflecting the realities of 1945 and the "to the victor belong the spoils" approach continues. This is so only because there is a perception that there are some member-states that do not want to reform the Organization and the Council because they themselves lack the confidence to make a bid for permanent membership.

We have repeatedly stressed that reform of the Security Council is necessary in order to align it with today's 21st century realities and to bring to the table large unrepresented parts of the world-Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, the Small Island Developing States and others.

Even more unacceptable, in my delegation's view, is the lethargy which in turn reflects not the position of the member-states but the cynical perception of those who view the status quo as serving their own interests.

An eleven member Council with five permanent members in 1945 at a time when the UN membership was just above 50 cannot claim to be the legitimate and linear progenitor of today's 15 member Council with the same set of P5 in the midst of a UN membership that has quadrupled in the last six decades.

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to align myself with the statement made by Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, PR of Jamaica on behalf of the L.69 Group.

As you are well aware, the L.69 is a group of UN member-states that comprises a diverse group of countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. Today's statement by the L.69 Group is a game changer for the reform process as it reaches out to various countries by incorporating the aspirations of our brothers from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, the Small Island Developing States. The core message of the L.69 Group is the call for comprehensive reform of the Council which has as its central element an expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. Also it provides the contours of what a final settlement would look like.

My delegation calls for a much shorter text amenable to real negotiations that does not exceed two or three pages. This text should first and foremost capture the prevailing and unchallenged sense of this august assembly, namely, the urgent need for expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership of the UN Security Council.

Those who differ should feel encouraged to put their own proposals into the text. Not doing so could result in their missing the boat.

We are confident that Ambassador Zahir Tanin will be able to produce such a shorter text by the middle of January 2011.

Mr. Chairman,

India's position on Security Council reform is too well known to require reiteration. In both our individual capacity, and as a member of two groupings devoted to early reform of the Council, namely the G4 and the L69, India would like to mention the elements that need to be in the negotiation text.

First, the overwhelming majority of UN member-states have expressed their clear preference for expansion of the Council in both its permanent and non-permanent categories.

Second, the shorter text should faithfully reflect the convergence regarding expanding the Security Council to 25/26. This must include an expansion in the permanent category from the present 5 to 11, with the addition by name of two new permanent seats from Africa, two new permanent seats from Asia, one new permanent seat from the Latin American and Caribbean region and one new permanent seat from the WEOG countries. The non-permanent category must be expanded from the present 10 to 14/15 with the addition of one new non-permanent seat each for the Asian, East

European, GRULAC states and one/two non-permanent seats for the African states taking into account the need to ensure representation from developing countries, including small island developing states, wherein participation shall be on the basis of the concept of rotating seats.

Third, new permanent members shall have the same rights and obligations as the current permanent members. However, if some of the new permanent members decide not to enforce their veto right till such a time as a comprehensive review is undertaken, they should be allowed to do so. This would of course be without prejudice to the proportionate changes in the minimum numbers needed to take decisions on matters other than the procedural ones in the reformed Council. This also does not however preclude from the immediacy of the task at hand, namely for restricting or limiting the use of the veto under certain circumstances such as: genocide, crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law; war crimes, ethnic cleansing and terrorism.

Fourth, India associates itself with the growing clamour for early reform of working methods of the Council.

Fifth, India calls for the General Assembly and the Security Council as two principal organs of the UN to respect each other's distinct roles, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, so as to secure the effective functioning of the UN as a whole.

And finally, there must be a comprehensive review after a period of fifteen years during which the entire structure of the Security Council would need to be revisited.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, we are both ready and willing to reach out to other countries and to work in close cooperation with them towards the goal of achieving urgent reform of the Council in keeping with the changing realities of the current times.

Let me assure you and the rest of the UN membership of our willingness to remain constructive and reasonably flexible on all issues on the table in the months to come and urge other delegations to do likewise.

Thank you.

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