

STATEMENT BY MR. ANUPAM RAY, COUNSELLOR, AT 2<sup>ND</sup> CLOSED  
MEETING OF THE AD HOC WORKING ON THE REVITALIZATION OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON MAY 30, 2008

Distinguished co-chairs,

I would like to begin by thanking the co-chairs for organizing today's meeting of the ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly in accordance with UN GA resolution 61/292 and the wishes of the member states expressed during the first meeting of the working group. My delegation would like to align itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned movement.

I would like to particularly commend the efforts of the co-chairs in painstakingly cataloguing all the relevant provisions on revitalization and in dividing the relevant provisions into three main clusters. The clusters, that deal with firstly, working methods, documentation, agenda, etc; secondly, with Selection of the Secretary General; and finally, with the role and authority of the General Assembly have been further conveniently subdivided into thematic areas. This is an admirable effort and helps us obtain an overview about where the revitalization process stands.

My delegation acknowledges the importance of progress on these issues, particularly progress in those areas where practical results can be obtained. However, there is a limit to which discussions relating to time limits on speeches and provisions relating to modern technologies will serve the essential purpose of revitalizing the General Assembly.

Distinguished co-chairs,

Hobbes said in the Leviathan that "Covenants, without the sword, are but words." This is the crux of the issue when it comes to revitalization of the General Assembly. We all accept that the disparity of authority between the Security Council and the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, its General Assembly needs to be addressed.

My delegation believes that Member States will be unsuccessful in addressing this disparity unless, like the Leviathan, the General Assembly is given its sword. Leviathan requires the sword to lift man out of the state of nature and to uphold justice. The General Assembly needs to be given its sword which will take its role to something beyond just deliberation, representation and policy-making. It needs the tools and the mechanisms that will enable it to have a role in the creation and implementation of international law and in the creation and maintenance of a just and equitable world order.

Distinguished co-chairs,

The General Assembly requires to be empowered in order for it to be revitalized. My delegation believes that debates on procedures and working methods by themselves are sterile.

When an advisor warned him against conflict with the Catholic Church, Josef Stalin apparently asked , "How many divisions does the pope have?" This was of course a rhetorical question. However it brings home the point that there is a limit to the usefulness of discussing procedural issues.

The General Assembly will not be empowered by strengthening procedures. It will only be strengthened if the Member States, like the Commonwealth in the Leviathan, decide to give it a sword. Without agreeing with David Lloyd George's statement that diplomats were invented to simply waste time, my delegation would like to submit that it is only the presence of political will that will revitalize and empower the General Assembly.

Distinguished co-chairs,

What form will this sword take? My delegation has a number of suggestions. Control over legislations, over materials and over men, confers power. Within the United Nations system, it is the Security Council, with its limited representation and its opaque working methods, that controls the legislation and the manpower. The General Assembly has a role in the control of materials through the Fifth Committee and the Budgetary process.

My delegation has in the past made a number of proposals to empower the General Assembly. These have been in the areas of making the Security Council more responsive to the General Assembly, in the General Assembly taking a greater role in the maintenance of international peace and security, through the process of mandate review, in the process of selection the Secretary General and in the strengthening of ECOSOC. We believe that this require serious consideration if any useful discussion on revitalization is to be followed through.

Further to these proposals, my delegation also believes that the General Assembly should have a greater role in the appointments of senior personnel in the United Nations system. My delegation would like to suggest that senior personnel of the rank of Under Secretary General and those vested with substantial executive authority obtain the approval of the General Assembly.

Distinguished co-chairs

I would like to conclude by quoting George Barnard Shaw who once said that if all economists in the world were laid side to side they would not reach a conclusion.

I hope that this is not the case with our current discussion. The revitalization of the General Assembly is to serious a task to be left to a sterile death in the very committees that it is meant to empower.

Thank You

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