

**Ad Hoc Working Group
on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly**

Thematic debate on the role and authority of the General Assembly

INDIA STATEMENT

By

Mr. A. Amarnath

Counsellor

12 March 2020

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to deliver brief remarks on behalf of my country in national capacity.

‘Role’ and ‘Authority’ - are the two key words to today’s debate. The role of the General Assembly is clearly laid out in Article 10 of the UN Charter, wherein it is empowered to discuss any question or matter within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of other UN organs. Any outsider, without the knowledge of how the UN system works, would presume, by just reading the above mandate, that General Assembly is the most authoritative body in the UN system. Indeed, this was the vision envisaged for the Assembly.

But, unfortunately the reality is different. Over the years, we have witnessed the progressive erosion of Assembly’s authority by Security Council. The Council has redefined its mandate through wider interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security and has been engaging in discussions on issues that clearly fall within the purview of the General Assembly. This must be remedied and a proper relationship, based on respect for the respective mandates of General Assembly and Security Council in the spirit of the Charter, should be established. Relieving the Council from some of its overburdened

agenda will also enable it to focus on the real hotspots that constitute a clear and present danger to international peace and security.

Part of the blame for this situation must also be taken by the General Assembly. A closer look at the agenda items of the Assembly last year will reveal that around 40% pertain to organisational, administrative and other such matters. Issues like humanitarian assistance, combating international terrorism constitute only than 1% of Assembly's agenda items. This is not the role intended for the Assembly in the Charter. General Assembly must be in the vanguard of global agenda-setting, particularly on important challenges faced by the world.

We must ask ourselves a frank question. Do we, the member states, have the will and commitment required to reinforce the authority of the Assembly as mandated by the UN Charter? If the answer is yes, then there is no better time to act on this question than 2020, which marks the 75th anniversary of establishment of the United Nations. We should galvanize our efforts towards strengthening the multilateral system by restoring the leadership role of the General Assembly on issues of global importance.

Co-Chairs,

India welcomes the efforts taken by the President of GA and ECOSOC to ensure the alignment of agendas of these two principal UN organs. It is an essential step, which will avoid duplication of work between them and promote efficiency. However, in doing so, the primacy of the General Assembly must be ensured.

Lastly, revitalization of the General Assembly must also be seen in the wider context of the overall reform of the United Nations, including the reform of the Security Council, which the General Assembly has been struggling to adopt for last 25 years.

Co-Chairs,

I am confident that under your guidance, we will be able to achieve concrete progress this year on the revitalization of role and authority of the General Assembly. My delegation will continue to give constructive support to your efforts to further the goal of this working group.

Thank you.
