



**STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON
AGENDA ITEM 53: "QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON
AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND
RELATED MATTERS" ON JULY 12, 2005**

Mr President,

We congratulate you in convening this historic meeting of the Plenary under Agenda Item 53. You have led us with honour and distinction during the 59th session and we are confident that as we near its conclusion, we will achieve fruitful and productive outcomes under your able leadership.

This is not another plenary debate. The G-4 have introduced a historic resolution that seeks to reform the Security Council in such a manner and through such a process that would revitalise the General Assembly through praxis and not mere promises, through action and not through mere aspiration. The General Assembly cannot be revitalised through wishing and desiring this but through hard thought and harder exercise of will.

The critics of the resolution – and there are not many – have alleged that we have put up the proposal in haste, that we have not been inclusive in approach and that a decision on the matter should only be taken on the basis of consensus. The debate on Security Council reform has been taking place for over 12 years now, and the issues are widely known. These discussions have intensified over the past one year. In the past six months, there has been a particularly intense process of consultations. The substance of the proposal has been discussed by G-4 with every group and member state in the United Nations, both in New York and capitals. Not only is the resolution the culmination of discussions that have taken place for well over a decade, but it is the consequence of a broad-based consultation process that takes on board the concerns and views of all. And finally, in moving ahead and calling for action, we are heeding the advice of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan who has stated, not without reason, that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without a reform of the Security Council and that, as a consequence, Member States should take a decision on this issue before September 2005.

Likewise, the undue emphasis on consensus only serves to confuse and obfuscate the issue. By adopting resolution 53/30, the General Assembly has quite clearly determined that the requirement for a decision on this question is two-thirds of

the membership. To now artificially raise the bar – as some have sought to do, including a recent speaker – is quite clearly arbitrary and self-serving.

The critics of the G-4 proposal would do well to remember that the genesis of the proposal is the High-Level Panel's report and the Secretary-General's own report "In Larger Freedom". It is currently the only proposal on the table; one that takes into account the interests of all groups and regions within the UN system – big and small – and ensures a win-win outcome for every Member State. The other proposals are either for preserving the *status quo*, or, even if they acknowledge merit in the G-4 logic favouring an expansion in both categories, seek to do so on a narrow and restricted basis, without elaborating on either intent or content.

Most importantly, the G-4 proposal seeks to change the structure of the Security Council – a structure that is outdated and that has hitherto militated against the interests of the developing countries which constitute the majority of the Member States of the Organisation. And, it is only through a change in its structure and by breaking the charmed circle of permanent members, will it be possible to change the policies and political culture of the Security Council.

We are not trying to carve into stone a reform that is static. On the contrary, through the inclusion of the review clause, new permanent members will be held accountable for their performance, and should this, in the opinion of the wider membership, be found inadequate, the situation is entirely subject to change. In other words, the General Assembly which we are seeking to revitalise will continue to be the master of the reform process being undertaken.

It has often been argued that Security Council reform will overshadow some of the other critical issues set out in the Secretary-General's report. This argument is simply contradicted by facts: we have not introduced the resolution during the discussions on the Outcome Document and have, like other delegations, engaged intensively in the debate; far from the issue of development being diluted, it has been the centre of focus and will remain so: we are prepared to travel the entire distance on this vital issue in solidarity with developing countries. The UN Security Council reform model and process that we are proposing would exercise a beneficial influence on the overall reform by strengthening the General Assembly and removing or at least reducing concerns on unjust legislation or unfair use of human rights. Alternative models do not provide this synergy. We are as wary of artificial deferrals, Mr President, as others may be of artificial deadlines.

Mr. President,

Permit me to deal with some of the criticisms levelled at us both yesterday and today. Our critics wish to square the circle in traditional mathematics: they wish to increase UN Security Council efficiency and authority and improve its working methods but without breaking the charmed circle of the P-5. Efficiency is not an arithmetical or managerial concept; it is a function of optimal and just decisions; authority comes from wide acceptability of decisions perceived to be fair and just. These cannot be achieved without the contribution of new permanent members. Also how does one improve

working methods without mandating new permanent members to do so and holding them accountable if they do not?

To do something decisively that has been carefully thought out and discussed is considered a sign of immaturity but this is characteristic of youth impatient for change. To postpone and do nothing is perhaps a sign of maturity but equally of old age and decrepitude: in this sense maturity would also ensure consensus. We are equally unswerving in supporting the representation of African countries; the only difference that we do not swerve when it comes to their permanent membership.

Mr. President,

Our critics say that since the reform that we are proposing is likely to be vetoed by some of the P-5, it is a fruitless dead-end. We believe that a decision taken thrice by the General Assembly through a two-thirds majority cannot be politically vetoed: it is not a dead-end but a barrier that has to be broken through so that from the dead end that it is almost reaching, the General Assembly is resurrected and revitalised as the most powerful universal body of the United Nations. Our critics add that their reform model is better because it would be ratified by the P-5. Precisely for this reason it would be worse for the General Assembly. In a discussion with friends from the African Union a few weeks back, I quoted a 19th century thinker who favoured a "radical reform, reform that is permitted by reason and not permitted by the police". Our critics offer us a reform that is permitted by the police and not permitted by reason.

Their logic is incomprehensible. President Truman spoke of the noble purposes of the UN. But, as the records of the Potsdam Conference show, he also inaugurated the Cold War. It is quite clear that our critics therefore continue to support the dominance of the current power structure. They speak of the ethics of the UN and of national elections, on which G-4 countries hardly require any lessons. It is said that permanent members with the veto, without the veto and non permanent would comprise three unmanageable and unequal tiers. But the continued dominance of the P-5 and the proposed twenty non permanent members would form one happy equal family. The small states who have cosponsored our resolution, according to this logic, do not know their own interests: a small state elected once in 40 years is represented but a small state that benefits from increased policy and political space and participates everyday in the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council does not get any benefit at all. An election after which the record of non permanent members is not examined is accountability. A stringent review holding new permanent members accountable is lack of accountability. Most astonishing of all is the complete reinterpretation of the African Union Summit. Not providing for one more non permanent seat makes the G-4 proposal totally incompatible with AU positions. But denying both permanent seats to AU makes the Uniting for Consensus proposal fully compatible. The G-4 is saying that the question of veto should be discussed after 15 years; the AU that it should be discussed now. Our critics from the Uniting for Consensus, however, say that the AU is not interested in the veto but in something else. This is to reinterpret the Ezulwini consensus and the AU Summit document and to claim to know what the AU wants better than the AU itself. What is more the Uniting for Consensus proposal speaks of continuous presence: the arithmetical effect of this on other seats would be much more adverse than what is

claimed for the G-4 proposal; politically it would be far worse since there would be no benefit of greater policy and political space and participation in the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council which is what the G-4 resolution proposes. One of the Uniting for Consensus countries "warned" the G-4. We do not know if this is a friendly pointing to a danger to be avoided or a threat to be heeded. This completely unselfish and fruitful travesty of logic is dressed up as total absence of national ambition and total care for the welfare of the general membership.

It has been said that the number of members in a new Security Council should not exceed "twenty plus". I merely want to remark on the striking arithmetical coincidence. Also, it was said that there should be no dilution of the status of the P-5: I would have imagined that surely that is the whole point; we have to dilute the status of the P-5 through new permanent members in order to break the charmed circle and reach optimal decisions, acceptable to a broad majority of the general membership.

Another statement said that our model of reform is divisive (a point made also by the Uniting for Consensus) and we should have a broad based agreement. How does one find out whether there is a broad-based agreement? Surely, a broad-based agreement is not a figment of the imagination. It has to be found through a process of voting which will show whether there is a broad-based agreement or not. It was also mentioned that here such decisions require the support of two-thirds of the Senate. We entirely agree with this. That is exactly why we are proposing that a similar decision on Charter amendment for changing the structure of the Security Council should require the two-third support of the general membership of the United Nations. It is said that this should be part of a package but the point is that as the UNSG has advised, the package does not imply that decisions should not be taken by voting if there is no consensus or should not be taken earlier. In fact, the UNSG's clear advice is that a decision on this vital issue should be taken early precisely in order to use the synergy I referred to for other aspects of UN reform. It is further said that the UNSC should be effective. But, here again, as I have argued earlier, effectiveness is not an arithmetical concept; I repeat that it is optimal decisions, to which developing countries have contributed and their wide acceptability that would make the Security Council effective – not arithmetic or a narrow managerial approach. Again, it is said that only States that have the necessary capacity should be there. Who is to judge whether a State has the capacity? Surely, it is the General Assembly. In any case, if the criteria that are being proposed had been adopted in 1945, half the membership of the Security Council would not be there. In conclusion, the statement said the G-4 Resolution would not strengthen the United Nations and, therefore, the General Assembly was urged to oppose a vote on it and to vote against it. The General Assembly has to make up its mind: does it want to revitalize itself? If it does, the choice is clear: it should vote and not go by consensus; and it should vote in favour of the G-4 Framework Resolution.

And finally, Mr President, I will return to the point that I began with – the whole issue of G-4 hurtling down the road with a resolution in undue haste. Quite clearly, the facts show otherwise. We have painstakingly worked with Member States and regional groups on a reform package that we believe will serve the interests of all. We have respected the wishes of the African Union and CARICOM who had urged us to table our resolution after the summits in Libya and St Lucia. We will continue to negotiate and

talk with these groups, in keeping with the spirit of the Brussels Statement and the London Declaration, and with other Member States and regional groupings. Even as we do so, we appeal to them for their support and understanding, in our joint endeavour to give the developing countries their due and rightful place in the highest echelons of decision-making in the United Nations that has hitherto been denied to them. We would also appeal to all Member States to seize this rare opportunity to usher in reform and change, that we are convinced (and after today's debate more than ever before) is needed if the United Nations is to represent an effective and genuine multilateralism in the truest sense of the term.

Thank you, Mr President.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)