



STATEMENT BY MR. AJAI MALHOTRA, ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: SUBSTANCE OF DEBATES AND RESOLUTIONS, RELEVANCE OF GA WORK AT THE THEMATIC MEETING NO.2 OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF THE REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON APRIL 06, 2006

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I would like to associate myself with the comments made by Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We have previously addressed the need for and measures that can be taken to enhance the role and authority of the General Assembly. Thus, there may, *per force*, be some duplication in the issues raised today with those that we have raised previously.

Madam Chair,

The representative of the Non-Aligned Movement has already objected to the choice of the word "relevance" vis-à-vis the UN General Assembly in the title of the themes that we are discussing today. Accordingly, I will not focus further on that point, except to state that the relevance of the UN General Assembly is beyond doubt. What we are considering is how to enhance its role and authority.

In response to the first question that you have placed before us today, it would be useful to revisit OPs 2 and 3 of GA resolution 59/313 on a "strengthened and revitalized Assembly". It would be seen that thematic debates are one of six elements outlined in Operative Para 2 of resolution 59/313. There can be little doubt that further strengthening of the GA's role and authority will take place as a result of holding thematic debates. Operative Paras 2(b) to 2(f) of resolution 59/313, *inter alia*, speak of consideration of special reports of the

Security Council through substantive and interactive debates in the UN General Assembly, of consideration of special subject-oriented reports submitted by the Security Council to the General Assembly on issues of current international concern, of the Security Council updating the UNGA on improvements in its reporting to the General Assembly. Unfortunately, no such reports have ever been submitted by the Security Council. As a result there has been nothing to consider. Securing the implementation of these provisions via thematic debates could certainly be a useful measure for strengthening of the GA.

Turning to the issue of selection of the themes for major thematic debates, it would be seen that Operative Para 3(a) of resolution 59/313 indicates that the President of the UNGA can propose interactive debates on current issues on the agenda of the Assembly, in consultation with Member States. Views of the Member States in deciding the themes for such periodic thematic discussions would be important in ensuring that the issues taken up are indeed of current global relevance. It would also be useful to avoid duplicating discussions held recently in other UN fora, for example, in ECOSOC or its functional Commissions. Revisiting many of the GA resolutions, starting from 57/270B, would show that the aspect of funding of developmental/humanitarian assistance, or the means of implementation is an important issue for the General Assembly to address. An overall assessment of the fulfillment of MDG-8 is another such issue.

I agree with the Ambassador of Jamaica that the UN General Assembly is the primary policy making organ of the UN and must be treated as such. ECOSOC could do much of the monitoring of implementation since it is the central mechanism for system-wide coordination and promotion of the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow up to major UN conferences in the economic, social and related fields.

Turning to the next issue, Madam Chair, the need for GA resolutions to be concise, focused and action-oriented has been recognized in GA resolution 58/126. These are impeccable suggestions; obviously, no one wants resolutions that are long-winded or unfocussed. However, in the attempt to adopt a more concise text, the substantive elements of the resolution have to be kept in mind. Shortening the text of resolutions may not be practicable beyond a point and it is in any case not an end in itself.

As regards the issue of greater participation by and interaction with NGOs and others, this has to be seen in the context that UN decision-making is necessarily an inter-Governmental process. We cannot overlook or bypass this inter-Governmental character of the UN. The General Assembly has agreed on rules of procedure that must be strictly and diligently observed. The revitalization of the General Assembly cannot take place by compromising its rules of procedure.

As regards making the work of the General Assembly more visible to the public, the example set by the present UNGA President of leading from the front is worth emulating. Above all, the General Assembly makes its presence felt through its actions and the quality of its decisions. In recent months the General Assembly has established CERF, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. These far-reaching steps have provided automatic visibility to the work of the UNGA. The GA can ultimately become more visible only if it takes important decisions or contributes to important decisions that matter.

In this context, I cannot avoid mentioning the issue proposed for our next discussion, namely, the role of the UNGA in election of the UN Secretary-General. It is by asserting its authority on issues assigned to it under the Charter and preventing encroachment by other organs of the UN on its authority and mandated responsibilities that the UNGA would be able to strengthen its public visibility. After all it is not only who you are that determines whether your actions are newsworthy, it is also what you do, i.e., the actions themselves that are important in determining whether the spotlight will be turned in your direction.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)