



STATEMENT BY MR. T.C. GEHLOT, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 12: SUPPORT BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM OF THE EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENTS TO PROMOTE AND CONSOLIDATE NEW OR RESTORED DEMOCRACIES AT THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 05, 2007

Mr. President,

We thank the UN Secretary-General for his reports under the agenda item 12 titled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The United Nations has long supported nascent democracies in the conduct of elections and promoted transparent and accountable governance. It has also assisted countries emerging from conflict and political upheaval to build democratic institutions. We welcome the increasing role of the UN in facilitating international cooperation within the framework of the follow-up to the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, particularly in providing democracy assistance or advise.

Mr. President,

India is honored to be a regular participant at the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD). It is important to share experiences on democratization and to identify means by which to promote pluralistic and participatory democracy. We note with satisfaction that the participation in ICNRD has grown from 13 countries at the first Conference in Manila in 1988 to 142 countries in Doha in 2006.

Democracy is a powerful ideal, but its successful exercise requires strong and enduring institutions, laws and procedures and the development of a parliamentary culture, whose essence is the accountability of those in authority to the ordinary citizens of the country. An independent and impartial judiciary, a free press, professional civil and military establishments, constitutionally empowered institutions to safeguard the rights of all sections of society, and an independent electoral mechanism; these are some of the more important elements of democracy.

Mr. President,

India's democratic heritage is rooted in its cultural ethos of tolerance, respect for different view points and a ready embrace of diversity. India has demonstrated that stable, long-term growth can be successfully realized alongside a thriving democracy. Indeed, the Indian experience shows that implementation of proactive development policies and economic reforms, when coupled with a liberal democratic polity, leads to overall stability and growth and significant poverty reduction.

India has been sharing its rich experience, institutional capabilities and training infrastructure with nations that have sought its assistance. In the same spirit, India has also been supportive of UN efforts to build the institutional and human capabilities that are necessary to underpin the successful exercise of democracy. As the world's largest democracy, it was also natural for India to support the establishment of the UN Democracy Fund. We had made an initial contribution of \$10 million to this Fund and remain actively and constructively involved in realizing the objectives for which it has been set up. India has recently announced a further pledge of \$10 million to the UN Democracy Fund. It also stands ready to share its experiences and undertake collaborations with other countries under the auspices of the UN Democracy Fund, including in areas such as institutional building, awareness creation and leadership development.

Mr. President,

We have noted the Secretary-General's concrete recommendations on how to improve cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and other relevant movements and organisations concerned with the promotion of democracy. Apart from the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, the United Nations is expanding its interaction with other inter-governmental organisations working in the democracy field, including the Community of Democracies and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The suggestion that the UN could assist in creating mechanisms for coordination and cooperation among these global democracy movements needs to be carefully considered. UN efforts should perhaps, instead, focus on institution and capacity building in interested Member States.

Mr. President,

Our collective efforts should be on improving the capacity of Member States so that they can embrace the rule of law and democracy. The aim should be to continue to strengthen democracy where it is new or restored, and encourage its restoration where the transition to democracy is derailed. As the world's largest democracy, India is ready to join the efforts of Member States to strengthen the activities of the United Nations to uphold and cherish democratic values.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)