



Statement by Mr. Nirupam Sen, Permanent Representative,
at the meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable
Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other
Matters on 15th September 2008

Mr. President,

Thank you for this meeting. For the first time after fifteen years, your text clearly mandates intergovernmental negotiations in the informal GA plenary with a fixed time line of January 31, 2009. It removes any substantial linkage between the OEWG and the informal GA plenary. The formal relationship left is the maximum extent to which we can go because it clarifies the consultative role of the GA exercised through the OEWG and its negotiating role exercised through the informal plenary. For the first time the text correctly contains the linguistic and political reflection of the arithmetical balance between more than two-thirds who have been for this position and the less than one-third who have not. We therefore congratulate you and the Task Force and strongly support your text. It is evident that in the legal UN meaning of consensus (supported by numerous commentaries on the Rules of Procedure which I cited on earlier occasions), there is a consensus because consensus means that those who oppose the text do not oppose it strongly enough to seek a vote.

The explorer Ernest Shackleton once said that superhuman effort isn't worth a damn unless it achieves results. Results have been achieved. The efforts of the L69 and all our partners have achieved results. These could not be in full measure for anybody but are in substantial measure for everybody. We have results rather than a continuation of mere routine.

One of our distinguished colleagues extolled the virtues of continuity and clarity, meaning that we should continue to do nothing and be clear that we shall do nothing. Another colleague thought a slow pace positive. Having seen the positive results of such a pace for fifteen years, we should consider a change. One of the leading lights of the UFC wanted to substitute the phrase "informal GA plenary" with the phrase "OEWG". As a serious proposal, it is not worth serious consideration. If made in a lighter vein, it is in poor taste. His colleague from the UFC should understand that the overwhelming majority has never accepted that the OEWG should get a new mandate and become a Prepcom for negotiations. I agree with my distinguished friend from Egypt that we should maintain the tradition of the OEWG: the tradition of the OEWG is to be a merely consultative body: we should clarify that it would not be anything else.

I am surprised by the previous speaker. He specially should realize that the organisation he represents needs added legitimacy and added resources. I am surprised that he sang the swan song of a declining organization, head buried in the sand till the sand chokes it.

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