



Intervention by H.E. Mr. M. S. Puri, Ambassador / Acting PR of India
during negotiations on "Relationship between the Security Council and the
General Assembly" 20 April 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor. Let me express our appreciation for your efforts in chairing this negotiation process.

Mr. Chairman,

The United Nations was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, ensure respect for international law and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

A General Assembly was created, where all Member-States would have a place. And, a Security Council with permanent and non-permanent members was set-up along with the ECOSOC, The Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and a Secretariat.

Of these, the UNSC is unique. Five UN Member-States, its permanent members, exercise a key role in its decision making.

It also acts on behalf of the larger membership and has been conferred the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

This concept of acting on behalf of all Members and the key role of the permanent members in reaching a decision in the UNSC must be central to the relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA.

These demand that the composition of the UNSC, especially in its permanent membership, embodies contemporary reality. This is critical to ensure that its decisions carry both actual legitimacy and reflect accountability. The Council also needs to be transparent in its functioning.

A fundamental reform of the composition of the UNSC is, therefore, key not only to improve the functioning of the Council and the UN as a whole but also to improve the relationship between the UNSC and UNGA.

This must include expansion in both permanent and non-permanent membership, and address the under-representation of developing countries, which comprise the vast majority of UN membership.

The uniqueness of the relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA is also evident from the Charter provisions.

While Article 15.2 mandates the UNGA to receive and consider reports from all other UN organs, there is a specific Article viz. Article 15.1, which mandates reports from the UNSC, both annual reports and special reports. This is reiterated in Article 24.3.

There have been efforts to improve the annual reporting from the UNSC to the UNGA.

Nevertheless, the annual report largely remains a compilation of events, with a bland listing of meetings and outcome documents. An analytical content to the report for better informing the Member-States the underpinning of the Council's decisions is lacking.

This is perhaps reflective of the fact that the UNSC remains insufficiently representative, its working methods remain non-inclusive, and its activities remain extremely opaque.

The mandate of special reports has almost been forgotten by the UNSC.

The issues of working methods reform, particularly access by non-members to documentation and the work of the UNSC; genuine consultations with TCCs; and the right of participation of non-members with a special interest, are also crucial to improving relationship between the UNSC and the UNGA.

In addition, the issue of UNSC's Charter mandate is relevant to today's discussions.

The Council should remain focused on its mandate and not try to re-define 'threats to international peace and security'. Such efforts only serve to encroach upon and undermine other principal organs, especially the General Assembly. This should not be the case at all.

Mr. Chairman,

It is unrealistic that changes in the issues that I have highlighted can be made without a genuine reform of the membership of the Council.

Such reform, with built-in review, cannot come from merely expanding the number of non-permanent members.

Earlier in the day, some delegations attempted to artificially summarize areas of agreement. But, ironically, these same delegations refuse to acknowledge that the overwhelming majority are for expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

I agree with the delegations that were clear that the key issue is expansion of the Council. And, in this let us hear the voice of the overwhelming majority.

Thank you

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