



STATEMENT BY MR. HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON
REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE 64TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 19, 2009

Mr. President,

I am happy to participate in today's debate on the 'Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly'. My delegation associates itself broadly with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement as expressed by the delegation of Algeria.

Mr. President,

We are guided by the desire to have a more effective United Nations. India wants the United Nations to be an organization that is truly responsive to the priorities and aspirations of the Member States, particularly for the developing countries, who constitute the vast majority of the membership. Its working methods must also embody efficiency and transparency.

The role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, legislative, policy-making and representative body of the international community must be strengthened and respected in both letter and spirit.

Indeed, the strengthening of procedures, working methods, documentation and ensuring due follow up are important steps in that direction. Enhanced visibility and outreach of the General Assembly are equally important.

However, more important is the need to continue the focus on substantive measures to restore and enhance the role and authority of the General Assembly including in

exercising control over legislation, material and manpower, and its role as the chief oversight organ of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Being the voice of the international community, the General Assembly must have a greater say in the process of selection of the Secretary General.

The mandate for the appointment of the UN Secretary-General flows from Article 97 of the UN Charter, which envisages a role for both the General Assembly as well as the Security Council. The modalities of the appointment process have, however, come to be governed by para 4(d) of General Assembly resolution 11(1) of 24 January 1946. It would appear strange today that while we all promote the principles of transparency and an inclusive selection process, the General Assembly willingly agreed to impose such restrictions on its own Charter mandate. However, it is important to recall that the reason for resolution 11(1) was the context of the post-1945 world.

More than sixty years since the adoption of resolution 11(1), we live in a different world. While the Security Council itself must change to reflect contemporary realities and expand its membership in both permanent and non-permanent categories, the General Assembly cannot remain bound by self-imposed restrictions reflecting an era gone by. The General Assembly's role cannot be merely to rubber-stamp the recommendation of the Security Council.

The need for changes in the process of appointment of the Secretary-General has been recognized by all Member States. General Assembly resolutions 51/241 of 22 August 1997 and 60/286 of 9 October 2006 outline in detail proposals on improving this process.

These proposals include making full use of the Charter provisions on the General Assembly's power of appointment; due regard to regional rotation and gender equality; the possibility of the President of the General Assembly consulting with Member States to identify potential candidates endorsed by a Member State; encouraging formal presentation of candidatures for the position of Secretary-General in a manner that allows sufficient time for interaction with Member States; and requesting candidates to present their views to all States members of the General Assembly.

Clearly, what is required is the necessary political will to comprehensively consider and implement these changes. A more inclusive and interactive selection process would also enhance the authority and effectiveness of the Secretary-General, as well as increase the confidence of all Member States in the Secretary-General.

Mr. President,

The revitalization process also implies that the General Assembly should take a lead in setting the global agenda and restore the centrality of the United Nations. The convening power of the United Nations must be used more decisively in this regard.

There has been an increasing tendency to undermine the prerogatives and authority of the General Assembly by encroachment of its agenda by the Security Council. It is important that the balance between the principal organs of the United Nations, envisaged in the Charter, must be maintained and respected.

Of special concern is the encroachment by the Security Council on issues that traditionally fall within the General Assembly's competence, such as the process of standard-setting and codification of international law. Of concern also is the holding of thematic debates in the Security Council on issues that frequently fall within the purview of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council.

The resolution 60/286 reiterated that in addition to the Security Council making its annual report more analytical, it should submit special reports to the General Assembly. It is important to fulfill this provision to the satisfaction of Member States while the Security Council considers ways to further improve the quality of its reports to the General Assembly.

And, it is important that a truly representative body such as the General Assembly have a much greater say in the international economic and financial matters. The UN Conference on the 'World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development' has successfully demonstrated the convening power that the General Assembly can exercise on such global issues. Our expectation is that the Member States will continue their constructive engagement in the ad hoc open-ended working group of the General Assembly that has been set up in pursuant to the outcome of this Conference.

Mr. President,

Before I conclude, I would like to felicitate the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Norway and Ecuador for their significant efforts in this direction as Co-Chairs of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly for the 63rd session. My delegation looks forward to working with distinguished Permanent

Representatives of Slovenia and Argentina, co-Chairs for the present session of the Ad-Hoc Working Group, and assured them of our fullest cooperation and support.

I would also like to re-emphasise the need for undertaking comprehensive discussions on substantive issues that are critical for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

Thank you.

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