



Misión Permanente de Costa Rica ante las Naciones Unidas

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Statement by

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to the United Nations

on

Agenda Items 9 and 111 of the program of work

Report of the Security Council and Question of equitable representation on
and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

61st session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

December 11, 2006

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Madame President,

I want to start by thanking the President of the Security Council, the distinguished Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for his endeavors in the Council and for presenting its annual report to the General Assembly.

Madame President, distinguished delegates,

My Delegation has been expecting with great interest this report of the Security Council, mostly because this should be the first report of its nature to reflect the will of our heads of State and Government, as expressed during the 2005 World Summit.

Costa Rica was particularly interested in seeing how was the Security Council to implement the mandate given to enhance its accountability to the General Assembly.

We expected serious improvements in this regard. However, after studying the report we unfortunately have to conclude that this has not been the case.

This report serves the Security Council but does not contain the answers the General Assembly demands.

On the basis of last year's debate, we had also hoped that the practice of convening a session of the Security Council to discuss in depth its work and approve its report would be reinstated.

Unfortunately again, this has not been the case.

It is imperative to re-establish the practice of convening such an analytical session of the Security Council, as it happened in 2002. Doing so will definitely enlighten all of us and will effectively benefit our peoples.

I would like to recall that such a positive practice took place due to the commitment of the Delegation of Singapore, then a member of the Security Council. Building on this and aspiring to enhance the effectiveness, transparency, responsibility and accountability of the Council, Costa Rica gathered with Singapore, Jordan, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, to form the so called group of the "Small five".

Madame President,

My Delegation's position on United Nations' reform in general and that of the Security Council in particular is well known. However, this time I would like to highlight some elements:

Let me begin by stressing that, for Costa Rica, the issue of enlargement of the Security Council is only appropriate as a mechanism to re-establish the geographical representation that was lost as a consequence of the evolution of the world during the last sixty years. The main thrust for increasing its membership should not be only the economic contribution of those who pay the largest share or the particular responsibilities of some States in peacekeeping efforts. The enlargement of the Security Council should,

above all, be done bearing in mind the necessary representation of the interests of the poorest part of humanity, of those with limited access to the benefits of scientific and technological progress, of those who suffer the most from hunger and war and of those who pay the highest price for the deterioration of our planet.

Increasing the number of permanent members, on the other hand, is a complex issue and could indeed bring along unintended consequences. Some time ago, in June 2005, the Delegation of Costa Rica circulated a study that proves, beyond any doubt, that the Permanent Members of the Security Council not only acquire the most powerful positions within the Organization but also become permanent members of the most important organs and subsidiary bodies of the UN system. Hence, we are of the view that before debating a possible increase in the number of Permanent Members to the Security Council, serious engagement is required on the establishment of measures and guarantees to avoid the negative impact of the cascade effect we have witnessed so far.

An even greater limitation in acceding to the principal organs of the System and its subsidiary bodies could only result in the weakening of the sense of belonging by many of the excluded, jeopardizing the international legitimacy of the United Nations.

Madame President, distinguished delegates,

We would like to reiterate that it is imperative to undertake serious efforts to substantially improve the working methods of the Security Council. In doing so we may find the answer to the most significant reservations posed with regards to the Council as well as to the effectiveness of the Organization itself.

A more legitimate Security Council, capable of responding promptly to the concerns of Member States and to the world's public opinion, can only be achieved through, primarily, the enhancement of its working methods.

In this regard, we believe that the job done by the Working Group on documentation is an important step in the right direction. We would like to thank Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan, for his commitment and skilful leadership.

We look forward to the full implementation of the recommendations made by the Working Group, which for us are, indeed, just a starting point.

We are convinced that there is still a long way ahead of us in reestablishing the prestige of the Organization and for improving the legitimacy of its decisions. Although some may claim not to understand what we are talking about when we call for transparency and accountability, we will not cease to insist on the need of having more information about the endeavors of the Council and its decision making process. We will continue our efforts so as to ensure that everyone, with no exception, duly reports to this Assembly.

Ours is the era of transparency and accountability. This phenomenon is happening everywhere and the best kept secrets will see the light of day. Sooner or later, governments will answer for their deeds; first to their own people and then to the international community.

Today, more than ever, there is a need to reestablish the balance of power between the General Assembly and the Security Council. We must revive the intention of the founders of the Organization, so clearly stated in the Charter of the United Nations.

In accordance with the Charter, the Council acts on behalf of all Member States and has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is obvious, therefore, that the Council must inform this Assembly in a timely manner on its actions or lack thereof, so that the Assembly can exercise the control required and, should the need arise, take the necessary corrective measures.

However, these reports can not be the simple enumeration of facts that has been given to us today. The General Assembly has the right to expect documents of a more analytical nature that include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures taken by the Council as well as the positions expressed by its members.

To that effect we have in several occasions made a call for the Security Council to present special reports to the General Assembly, in accordance with article 24.3 of the Charter, each time the Council decides to establish a new peacekeeping operation, substantially modifies its mandate or creates a new set of sanctions. In the same manner, we believe that the Security Council should present a report to the General Assembly each time a resolution is vetoed. This is particularly relevant in the world we live today because our action or inaction is perceived immediately in every corner of the world.

In the Information Age we can not afford to lack the political will necessary to achieve a prompt and effective communication among all the stakeholders of the United Nations System.

Madame President,

There are other several pending issues that deserve our attention. However, let me conclude by bringing to your attention the issue of the veto, which in our view has lost much of its original purpose. This instrument, understandable in the days of its creation, requires a very responsible utilization in today's global community. The veto should not be used as an instrument for the advancement of individual interests at the expense of the interest and well being of the majority. It should neither be the key to lock all doors and lead to inaction.

Beyond an in-depth debate, today we want to underscore the need for urgent reform in order to eliminate or at least effectively limit the use of veto in cases of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and/or massive violations of human rights.

We observe with great satisfaction the increased awareness in this regard as well as the efforts undertaken to reform the Organization. Yet, we feel this process will not be complete until we succeed in the integral reform of the Security Council. We have made some progress, but certainly much more is still to be resolved.

Madame President,

Costa Rica reiterates its commitment to this Organization and its vision for the XXI century, so that together we can clearly respond to the peoples of the United Nations.

Never again should the world be witness to our inaction regarding the horrors so many people still face today.

Thank you.