



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hussein Haniff,
Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations,
on Agenda Item 117: The Question of Equitable Representation on
and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, and Related Matters
at the Sixty-Seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 15 November 2012**

Mr. President,

Allow me to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today, to further elaborate and take stock of what we have achieved in the eight rounds of discussions on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. I would be limiting my intervention on the issue of the reform of the United Nations Security Council, which appears as Agenda Item 117 in the work program of the Plenary.

Mr. President,

2. We term this process a negotiation process, but we all know this is not negotiations that we normally carry out at the UN. No negotiations were actually carried out. Yes, we had statement-reading sessions, which is hardly a negotiating process. Nevertheless, we should continue to meet, although deep down, we would quietly admit that this process is substantively where it was twenty years ago.

3. The eight meetings that we had on the issues of expansion and working methods of the Security Council has bought us nowhere closer to a reformed Security Council. Actually, in some ways, we have drifted apart further than we were 20 years ago. We have groups and member states that have manifested openly that they want the Council to be expanded and the working methods improved. Then we see bilateral and regional rivalries coming into play. We cannot even agree on what shape an expanded Security Council should look like.

4. This was evident last year, when a one operative paragraph draft resolution, seeking the expansion of membership of the Security Council, which all member states claim to agree, did not even see the light of day in this Assembly. It has been a zero sum game. It has become like "If I cannot make it to the Council, the other concerned member state should not be allowed to become a permanent member". I hear subtle voices saying, to the effect that, "Let's prolong these discussions without a closure, as I stand to lose if country X becomes a permanent member". Then we hear the same voices asking why the reform process is slow. I am amazed and puzzled!

5. Most member states profess their aim of having a more transparent, inclusive and engaging Security Council. Almost all present here today would agree that the veto power is, without doubt, undemocratic and morally unjustified. The irony is that, while we claim to be champions of democracy worldwide, some of us prefer an authoritarian model when it comes to the working of the Security Council. We also have suggestions that while the veto is bad, new permanent members should not be denied the “right” of having such powers. For all the hype of improving the working methods of the Security Council, we came to this august hall in May, only to be told that the concerned draft resolution has been withdrawn.

6. Let’s ask ourselves, are we really serious in wanting the reform of the Security Council? Or we just want to be seen as being politically correct; hence we continue to mislead the world by claiming that we want reform in this important organ of the United Nations? It is time for us to reexamine our real intentions and positively help the process to move forward. In this connection, we complain that the UN is asking too much from member states in financing its operations, but we, member states, are at times to be blamed for this higher operational cost. This 20-year discussion of UNSC reform is a clear example of how we have contributed to the increase in the UN operational cost.

Mr. President,

7. Where do we go from here?

8. We can continue to pretend that we are in a negotiating process. We can meet once in every two or three months, gather just for the sake of reading statements prepared with the singular intention of putting across just our views, and in the process, ridicule the ideas of other parties. We can continue to take the “all or nothing” approach, like what has been done in the past 20 years. We can also continue intimidating smaller countries in the discussions, and then claim that all member states have equal rights in this most democratic assembly. To be politically correct, we should also continue telling the world that we want to reform the Security Council, even though deep down we know that is not what we actually want, and that we will take all steps - political, legal and technical- to stall the whole process, and then blame the other party for being inflexible. By the way, Mr. President, the word “flexibility” has taken a new meaning in our discussions. It effectively means “you should agree with what I said and abandon your position”. All these shortcomings, Mr. President, as we all agree, is making the task of HE Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Chairman, of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council to push forward the process much more difficult.

9. We should start some real negotiations, with a workable text and reasonable timelines for the process to conclude. We have tried with the compilation texts in the past. We did not go anywhere. It’s time that all of us, especially the majority membership, with little or no say at all currently in matters related to maintenance of international peace and security, to stop this “all or nothing” approach, and to walk the talk on the issue of flexibility. We, the majority, stand to lose, with this stalemate. We can continue this political charade of the highest order. Or we can choose to start real negotiations, with a reasonable timeline for conclusion. Until such time, Mr. President, we have only ourselves to blame for our inability to play a more meaningful role in the work of the Security Council. Malaysia sincerely hopes that we will achieve some progress when we continue to deliberate on this important issue during the current General Assembly. Otherwise, we are just repeating ourselves.

I thank you, Mr. President.