

Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the Meeting of the Adhoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly on 27 March 2012

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Let me begin by thanking His Excellency, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly for sharing his views on the role and authority of the General Assembly and the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the PGA for his decision to appoint Ambassador Susan Waffaa-Ogoo, Permanent Representative of The Gambia and you, Mr. Alexander Lomaia, my distinguished friend the Permanent Representative of Georgia as Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on General Assembly Revitalization for this session.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

I welcome your appointment and on behalf of my delegation, assure you of my delegation's steadfast support as you go about your task of guiding this Group.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express appreciation for the excellent work done by Ambassador Camillo M. Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Ambassador Dalius ?ekuolis of Lithuania as Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group last year. Equally, I would like to place on record my delegation's appreciation for the work done by the Algerian delegation as the NAM Chair on this issue as well as for the other negotiating partners who have worked in a spirit of cooperation. Naturally my delegation wishes to align itself with the statement made by Algeria on behalf of the NAM.

Co-Chairs,

The starting point of my delegation's position on the issue of General Assembly revitalization is the firm belief that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations is respected both in letter and in spirit.

The GA should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality of the United Nations in formulating multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues. This was the role intended for the Assembly in Article 10 of the UN Charter, namely that it discuss any questions or matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the Charter, i.e. the Security Council, ECOSOC, Trusteeship Council, the ICJ as well as the Secretariat.

Co-Chairs,

My delegation participated actively in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Assembly revitalization in the 65th session. We provided a number of inputs at the meetings held during the last session. These inputs were provided in a spirit of constructive engagement and we are pleased that these were taken on board in the negotiations leading to the adoption of Resolution 65/315. While we are generally happy that Resolution 65/315 has been able to highlight some of the important steps required in our collective journey towards a revitalized General Assembly, we firmly believe, Co-chairs that we still have some distance to travel.

You have in your letter of 7th March called on delegations to provide concrete proposals on the revitalization of the General Assembly. I intend to respond to your call and place on record my delegation's considered views on some of the important aspects of the issue of General Assembly Revitalization.

First of all, it is critical that we establish a proper relationship of respect for the respective mandates between the General Assembly and the Security Council in the spirit of the Charter.

India joined the Security Council on 1st January last year, after a gap of 19 years. Ever since we have noticed firsthand that the Council's agenda is, to say the least, overburdened. This is because the Council busies itself with themes which no doubt and are certainly important, but do not appear directly connected to the real and immediate threats to international peace and security. This has left the Council with less time to focus on the real hotspots that constitute the real threats to international peace and security.

At the same time, however, we believe that remedial measures would only be half complete in the absence of serious introspection on what the General Assembly itself can do to mitigate the situation. Clearly, the Assembly will not be empowered merely by strengthening procedures. More important is the presence of political will to take concrete measures to reinforce the role and authority of the Assembly.

I would like this Working Group to lay special emphasis on the intergovernmental nature of the General Assembly. This is absolutely necessary at a time when the challenges to the international system are multiplying. We should abjure the tendency to resort to extraneous mechanisms in the work of the main committees of the General Assembly.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

At the last GA session, we had deviated from our usual emphasis on the matter of selection of the Secretary General since we were in the process of re-electing H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon. We did not want to send a signal which could be misunderstood.

However, this matter remains of interest to my delegation and we would like this Ad Hoc Working group to give the attention that this deserves.

We are of the view that the General Assembly must have a greater say in the process of selection of the Secretary General. General Assembly Resolution 11 (1) of February 1946 which lays out the “Terms of appointment of the Secretary-General” was the product of an era gone by.

The continued circumscribing of the Assembly’s role and responsibilities in the process of selection and appointment of the Secretary General needs to change in the interests of the United Nations system in general and the Assembly’s prerogatives in particular. And, as it was the General Assembly which limited its own role, it will have to be the General Assembly that claws back its rightful place in the process of selecting the Secretary-General.

What is to be done?

For instance, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 51/241 of 22 August 1997 and 60/286 of 9 October 2006, which outline in detail proposals on improving the process of selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. Further, the practice established by GA Resolution 11 (1) can be modified to allow for the Council to send a panel of names that the Assembly could choose from as against a single nomination. Additionally, if the member-states attach high importance to the role and responsibilities of the Assembly, we see no reason why the matter should not be “decided by a two-thirds majority” in terms of Article 18 (3) as against the one with a simple majority requirement in Resolution 11 (1). We could also identify objective criteria for the candidatures, including commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, extensive leadership, administrative and diplomatic experience with due regard being given to regional rotation and gender equality. Equally useful and practical would be to encourage formal presentation of candidatures in a manner that allows sufficient time for interaction with member-states, and also requires candidates to present their views to all member-states of the General Assembly.

Co-Chairs,

I would now like to address two other important issues of relevance to our meeting here today.

First, in our view the Charter provisions clearly reflect the desire of the UN membership to have an international civil service which displays the highest standards of professionalism, neutrality and integrity and which is accountable therefore, if not in higher, but at least in equal measure as the Secretary General is to the General Assembly. In addition, we would welcome closer consideration of procedures for selecting, appointing and confirming the heads of the major Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes with a view to ensuring transparency, legitimacy and balanced representation.

Second, we believe that the Assembly and other entities that form part of the UN system must reflect diplomatic best practices in its day to day functioning. And here there is a lot of need for interaction and learning to be done from member-states.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

In conclusion, let me re-emphasize the need to discuss substantive measures that would strengthen the role of General Assembly as the chief deliberative, legislative and policy-making and representative body of the international community. You can expect India's constructive support and participation in these efforts.

I thank You.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)