

Statement by Mr. Vinod K Jacob, First Secretary, at the Meeting of the Adhoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly on 10 May 2012

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Let me start by placing on record the Indian delegation's happiness at the decision taken by you to convene this meeting.

India has consistently held the view that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the UN is respected both in letter and in spirit. The General Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality of the UN in formulating multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues.

At the outset, we would like to align ourselves with the statement made by Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Co-Chairs,

The Assembly must have a greater say in the process of selection of the Secretary General.

In our assessment, 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.

It was an instance when the General Assembly decided to outsource the process of the Secretary General's selection to the Security Council. Now however with the circumstances having changed considerably it is perhaps the appropriate time for the General Assembly to claw back.

General Assembly 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 must be fully and faithfully implemented. 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 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,

On the matter of selection of other Executive Heads in the UN system organizations, our position flows from the clear guidelines in the Charter.

These 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.

Co-Chairs,

The primacy of the Assembly flows from the universality of its membership as well as the diligent application of the principle of sovereign equality of all its members. Ownership therefore, of the Assembly's decisions and activities, is reflected in the degree of participation by member-states. So, if there is a foreboding sense of apathy towards the work done in the Assembly, the member-states are also partly to blame.

If the member-states, instead of engaging in substantive deliberations in the six main committees that could result in setting new norms, spend considerable resources on procedural issues they will only encourage the usurpation of their role by other institutions both within and outside the UN. We also call for enhancing the oversight role of the Assembly vis-à-vis the UN staff and as reflected in the working of the Fifth Committee.

Co-Chairs,

On the issue of the visibility and enhanced public awareness of the work of the General Assembly, our position is two-fold.

First, the member-states need to make the Assembly and its work more relevant to the evolving international system, in other words, the presence of political will to take concrete measures to reinforce the role and authority of the Assembly. We need to properly appreciate and then correctly situate the Assembly within the plurality of multilateral mechanisms that deal with global issues.

Second, there are a number of best practices available in this regard in various international organizations, albeit on a smaller scale. Such best practices could be used as a guide to promote visibility and enhanced public awareness of the work of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, distinguished Co-Chairs let me re-emphasize the need to discuss substantive measures that would strengthen the role of General Assembly as the chief deliberative, legislative, policy-making and representative body of the international community.

You can expect our constructive support and participation in your efforts.

Thank You.

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