

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE,
AT THE JOINT DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEMS 120: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RESOLUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS & AGENDA ITEM 121: REVITALIZATION OF
THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE 66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON 1 DECEMBER 2011

Mr. President,

I am honoured to address the General Assembly on behalf of my country at today's joint debate.

We believe that the issue of General Assembly revitalization has assumed particular significance in recent years. This is quite vividly captured in the emphasis that PGA has placed on UN reform, including the revitalization of the General Assembly and reform of the Security Council which are among the four priorities for the new PGA.

I am happy to place on record our appreciation for the good work done by the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group last year, H.E. Mr. Camillo Gonsalves, the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and H.E. Mr. Dalius Cekoulis, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania.

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 worked in a spirit of cooperation during the last session.

Let me also welcome the appointments of the Permanent Representatives of Georgia and United Republic of Tanzania as co-Chairs of the *ad-hoc* Working Group for this Session. The Indian Delegation will support you in your task this Session.

Before I proceed to articulate our position, permit me to use some modern-day analogy to elaborate our basic approach to the two agenda items at hand.

Mr. President,

Whenever Facebook users want to express themselves through a post, they get feedback from their friends who in turn express themselves through three basic options: "Like", "Comment" and "Share." The best posts usually get large number of "Likes" and are "Shared" repeatedly, but the good ones get an equally large number of "Comment" because there is still scope for further improvement.

Spoken in facebook terminology, at present, GA revitalization is highly "commented" upon, much "liked" but rarely "shared." There is even the danger that if not acted upon quickly, the only function that would be applied to GA revitalization is that it would be consigned to the "event" category with its 'status' updated once a year!

Mr. President,

UN reform is a process that has to evolve with the evolving international situation.

An illustrative case in point is the extremely useful role that the major troop contributing countries could play in the UN, but are not being allowed to do so merely because we have not yet reformed the UN to make it reflect contemporary global realities.

Starker still is the stubborn refusal to implement the obvious, such as the commitment by world leaders in 2005 to bring about early reform of the Security Council.

The perpetuation of this state of affairs, sometimes with the active connivance of delegations purely out of narrow-minded national positions emanating from limited ambitions, is a travesty of the Assembly's prerogatives.

Such state of affairs is the most appalling disservice to Article 10 of the UN Charter which vests in the Assembly the power to 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, the ECOSOC, Trusteeship Council, the ICJ as well as the Secretariat, save those expressly excluded.

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 General Assembly 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.

In keeping with these guidelines, my delegation participated actively in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on General Assembly revitalization in the 65th session. We provided a number of inputs at the meetings during the last session. These inputs were provided in a spirit of constructive engagement and we are pleased that they 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 on our collective journey towards a revitalized General Assembly, we firmly believe, Mr. President that we have some distance still to travel.

Mr. President,

Without prejudging the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group that should start soon, I would like to place on record the Indian delegation's considered views on some of the important aspects of the issue which concern General Assembly Revitalization.

First of all, it is critical that we establish a proper relationship of respect for respective mandates between the General Assembly and the Security Council in the spirit of the Charter. In this it is particularly important that the Council not encroach upon the mandate of the General Assembly through extremely wide and permissive interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression and to the situations under which it can take action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

It is clear that the Council's agenda is, to say the least, overburdened because it has anointed itself with the responsibility of dealing with issues, which though seemingly important, leave it with less time to deal with the real hotspots that constitute the real threats to international peace and security. The balance between the General Assembly and the Council is only one of the dimensions of what needs to be addressed. We propose to raise these issues in the Ad Hoc Working Group.

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

The Assembly and the other entities that form part of the UN system must reflect diplomatic best practices in its day to day functioning. And it has a lot to learn from member-states in this regard.

Mr. President,

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, policy-making and representative body of the international community.

The General Assembly can expect India's constructive support and participation in these efforts.

I thank you.

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