

**STATEMENT BY MR. A. GOPINATHAN, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
ON AGENDA ITEM 56: QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND  
INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AT THE 58<sup>TH</sup>  
REGULAR SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 14, 2003**

Mr. President,

The Indian delegation welcomes this opportunity to comment on agenda item 56: "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council".

Many delegations expressed during the General Debate held at the beginning of the 58<sup>th</sup> session a sense of deep regret over the inability of the Security Council to reach satisfactory agreement on the issue of war and peace involving Iraq in the first quarter of this year. Many attributed the inability of the Council to arrive at a collective and unified decision on the major issues placed before it to the lack of balanced representation in its current composition.

The Prime Minister of India did touch upon this imbalance when he stated in his address to this session of the Assembly on September 24, and I quote: "For the Security Council to represent genuine multilateralism in its decisions and actions, its membership must reflect current world realities. Most UN members today recognize the need for an enlarged and restructured Security Council, with more developing countries as permanent and non-permanent members. The permanent members guard their exclusivity. Some States with weak claims want to ensure that others do not enter the Council as permanent members. This combination of complacency and negativism has to be countered with a strong political will. The recent crises warn us that until the UN Security Council is reformed and restructured, its decisions cannot reflect truly the collective will of the community of nations." Unquote.

Within the UN, there is ample recognition of the need for the Organisation and its architecture to deal with the maintenance of international peace and security to adapt to the needs and realities of the times. The Secretary General himself underscored this point on more than one occasion. In the report on the implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration presented to this session of the General Assembly, he

said and I quote: "Increasingly, however, the decisions of the Security Council lack legitimacy in the eyes of the developing world, which feels that its views and interests are insufficiently represented among the decision-makers. The composition of the Security Council – unchanged in its essentials since 1945 – seems at odds with the geopolitical realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Unquote. Introducing his report on the work of the Organisation at the beginning of the General Debate, the Secretary-General had said that to regain the confidence of States, and of world opinion, the Security Council must become and I quote: "more broadly representative of the international community as a whole, as well as the geo-political realities of the contemporary world" unquote.

India's position on the reform and restructuring of the Security Council has been summed up in the words of Prime Minister Vajpayee quoted at the beginning and, therefore, I shall not go into details as they have spelt out on several occasions in the past. Suffice to say that we do not subscribe to partial and piecemeal solutions that bring no resolution to the core problem. Nor are we be intimidated by "relevance of the time factor" cited by some as a reason to "rush" into partial reform. A subject as complex and intricate as Council reform cannot have a time line or a quick fix imposed, even as we agree that Council reform is urgent and pressing and must be administered in a reasonable time frame.

I would be remiss if I did not register my delegation's sincere appreciation for the lead taken by your predecessor and President of the 57<sup>th</sup> session, H.E. Jan Kavan, in the work programme of the Open-Ended Working Group for this year. Acting on a proposal made by some to streamline cluttered and unstructured documents, noteworthy progress was achieved in pruning down the document on Cluster II issues. The "Questionnaire" circulated to member States in the month of May was a dynamic initiative in that it posed and brought to the fore some very pertinent issues, apart from defining where the mainstream lies. It demonstrated that the majority continues to favour a comprehensive approach on Council reform, that there must be a simultaneous reform in both the permanent and non permanent categories and that Cluster I & II issues must be dealt with in tandem. Broad agreement was also expressed on the issue that the time is now perhaps ripe to start considering concrete proposals for reform on Cluster I issues. Member states have also expressed a willingness to consider a change in the working methods of the Working Group, in order to inject some dynamism and achieve a breakthrough or register some progress in the proceedings. We need to be cognisant of these facts, as we move forward.

Mr. President,

Finally, a word on the initiative of the Secretary General to set up a High-Level Panel of Eminent personalities to study the question of UN reform in a comprehensive way, of which Council reform will, no doubt, form an important part. We welcome the initiative and look forward to the Group's report and Secretary-General's recommendations thereon, expected sometime before the beginning of the 59<sup>th</sup> session. We hope that the initiative will impart a fresh outlook and inject new momentum into a

process that must now urgently move forward. We shall continue discussions in this spirit in the Open Ended Working Group next year. India, Mr. President, is wholly committed to working with other delegations in order to carry this process forward for achieving meaningful and productive outcomes.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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