



**STATEMENT BY MR. E. AHAMED, MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
ON AGENDA ITEM 11: REPORT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AGENDA ITEM 53:
QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN
MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND RELATED MATTERS AT THE
59TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 11, 2004-10-12**

Mr. President,

We welcome the opportunity to participate in the joint debate under agenda item 11: Report of the Security Council and agenda item 53: Question of equitable representation on, and increase in membership of, the Security Council and related matters.

I join other speakers before me in thanking Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom and President of the Security Council, for his presentation of the Report of the Council for the period 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004, to the General Assembly.

In the recent past, the Security Council has witnessed a substantial increase in the range of issues brought before it for its consideration. The end of the Cold War and the advent of the 21st century have brought to the fore new threats and challenges to international peace and security. Some of these threats, represented by an increasing number of inter- and intra-State conflicts, have evoked standard responses in the form of measures aimed at conflict-prevention, peace-keeping, peace-building, transitional justice and post-conflict national reconciliation.

Others are less direct and, in their ambiguity, pose a greater danger to the international order. These include international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction into the hands of non-State actors, international crime and narcotics. These require a very different response, the mechanics of which we are still calibrating.

The Council has had to act decisively to deal with the new threats. These have placed enormous strains on the existing system of collective security, sometimes straining it to break-

point. The ability of the Council to act effectively and responsibly in the future will provide an important re-assurance for the international community that its concerns in the area of security are being adequately addressed. This not only calls for greater political will and unity on issues, but the perception that the decisions taken by the Council largely reflect the concerns and aspirations of the general membership. A greater democratisation of the existing order, increased transparency in action and the co-option of different ideas, interests and sensitivities would be essential for the endeavour to succeed over time.

Mr. President,

Of late, the Security Council has increasingly appropriated legislative and treaty-making powers, as reflected in many of its decisions. The instances of resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004) were exceptional. But such actions should remain exceptions and not develop into norms. Increased resort to Chapter-VII resolutions and enforcement actions, even on matters that are better resolved through multilateral cooperation, can often be counter-productive. The Council can only best succeed in the implementation of its actions when its decisions are taken through a due process of consultations with the wider membership.

My delegation views with concern the tendency of the Council to adopt decisions on issues that impinge on the wide membership of the United Nations without taking into account the views of the States concerned. We call upon the Council to ensure the provision of adequate opportunity for the views of the wider membership to be heard on important issues through transparent mechanisms such as open debates of the Council before decisions on such issues are taken.

A majority of delegations had expressed concern over the lack of transparency in the functioning of the Council in the debate under this item at the 58th session of the General Assembly. Unfortunately, however, very little cognisance appears to have been taken of these suggestions. We had specifically recommended that selectivity in allowing participation under rule 37 of the Council's procedures be done away with in the interest of the democratisation of the Council's functioning. Yet, in a recent instance only one representative of a group of nations was permitted to express his views on an issue that, in our view, impinged on all States.

We had also spoken against the distinct lack of transparency in scheduling open and public meetings of the Council. With the exception of unforeseen developments, the Council has little reason not to disclose its full intentions for public and open events in its calendar released at the start of every month. This inexplicable lack of transparency can only give rise to misgivings on the part of the wider membership and perpetuate an impression of the Council acting as an entity separate from the wider membership in representation and intention.

We had also drawn attention to the increasing resort to thematic debates in the Council on issues that very often fall within the purview of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council. We had recommended that such events be rationalised and restricted in the interest of better utilisation of the time of the Council to deal with the burgeoning issues on its plate and to ensure a more productive outcome when such thematic issues are of direct relevance to the Council's work. It is high time, in our view, that thematic debates are held in the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

It is an inescapable conclusion that the true effectiveness of the Council and respect for its decisions can only be forthcoming if this critical organ of the United Nations is adjudged by the

larger membership to be representative of its interests. A perusal of the items on the Council's agenda will reveal that the majority of issues under its consideration pertain to the developing world. Yet, developing countries represented in the Council account for less than half of its membership at the best of times. This discrepancy becomes far more acute when the composition of the permanent membership is examined in isolation.

Mr President,

There is universal recognition of the critical need to undertake a comprehensive reform of the United Nations system, in order to forge a strong and effective multilateralism. This reform cannot be limited or uni-directional, but must be inclusive and all-encompassing, including elements such as revitalisation of the General Assembly, strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), reform of the Secretariat machinery, reform of the planning and budgetary process and, above all, an expansion of the Security Council, including reform of its working methods and decision-making processes. This would also enable restoring the economic agenda at the United Nations, apart from effectiveness and authority to the General Assembly.

The Security Council, as it is currently configured, is not representative of contemporary realities. The Prime Minister of India had touched upon this asymmetry when he had stated in his address to this session of the Assembly on September 23, and I quote "an overwhelming majority of the world's population cannot be excluded from an institution that today legislates on an increasing number of issues, with an ever-widening impact." Unquote.

There has been a four-fold increase in the membership of the United Nations since its inception in 1945, including a sharp increase in the number of developing countries. Though the provisions of the Charter give the General Assembly great authority and primacy, these have been eroded steadily over the past decade. The permanent membership of the Security Council must have the critical mass to respond to the aspiration of the democracy of member States and to act accordingly. In other words, without the inclusion and presence of developing countries in an expanded Security Council, all other reform elements aimed at restoring the authority of the General Assembly would be unavailing. That the vast majority of the general membership of the United Nations finds no place in the category of the permanent members and is inadequately represented in the non-permanent category is an anomaly that needs to be urgently rectified, if the Council's decisions and actions are to be viewed as representative and legitimate. Additionally, new players from the developed world have emerged, and it is important that they find their place in a restructured Security Council.

It is imperative, therefore, that the Security Council be comprehensively reformed, which includes an expansion of the Council's membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, and the inclusion of both developing and developed countries as new permanent members. Any attempt to limit expansion in the category of non-permanent members alone would not introduce the required representativeness in the Council's composition. Nor would the creation of new quasi-permanent seats bring about equitable representation or enhance its legitimacy, effectiveness or representativeness. Such partial and piecemeal attempts would only serve to conserve the present structure of the Council and would, in effect, erode its credibility even further. Instead of correcting, they would exacerbate current shortcomings in the Council's structure and functioning.

On its part, India has expressed its readiness to undertake its responsibility as a global player in an expanded Security Council. We will work together with Brazil, Germany and Japan and a candidate from Africa in our quest to make the Security Council more representative, legitimate and effective.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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