

Statement by Ambassador Asoke K. Mukerji, Permanent Representative at the Informal General Assembly Plenary Meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on "*Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council*" at United Nations General Assembly on
December 16, 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I have already addressed this meeting on behalf of the G4. In my national statement, I would like to align my delegation with the statement of the L.69 delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Nicaragua, and express our full support for the statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Guyana, on behalf of the CARICOM. These alignments demonstrate, Mr Chairman, India's mainstream position in these negotiations with a large number of like-minded developing countries from Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America, all of whom seek expansion in both categories of a reformed United Nations Security Council.

Like other speakers, Mr Chairman, my delegation is happy with your reappointment as the Chair of the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN). India has never hesitated in expressing publicly our support for your valued professional stewardship of our proceedings.

My country, Mr Chairman, attaches high priority to our work. Speaking in the General Assembly in September this year, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said, and I quote:

"For multilateralism to remain relevant and effective in the future, multilateral institutions need to be reformed. The place to begin is right here. The UN Security Council must be reformed and restructured to reflect current political realities. More developing countries should be included as both permanent and non-permanent members."

Mr Chairman,

Let me with your permission proceed to outline some practical suggestions for your consideration on how to structure our future work in the months ahead. What we are about to suggest to you, Mr Chairman, given your "institutional memory" of chairing this long-drawn out process, may appear to be *déjà vu*. You would recall that in March 2009, when we were engaged in the first round of these negotiations, you had proposed to give, and I quote "*guidance to Member States on the path to decisive progress*"¹. This is the same commitment that we are seeking of you, Mr Chairman, as we stand on the threshold of the tenth round of these negotiations today.

¹ A/63/960 dated 10 September 2009

First, we believe that all of us would benefit by your circulating a schedule of our meetings, preferably to be held at least once a month, from now till the end of the 68th General Assembly in September 2014, so that we can regain the momentum in our negotiations. In 2009, Mr Chairman, you had conducted our meetings by following a similarly circulated schedule.

Second, we would like you, Mr Chairman, to provide a framework for our activity, so that we can get down to our job of text-based negotiations in earnest. We agree with other member-states participating in these negotiations that such a framework document must be based on the views articulated by members during the previous nine rounds of our discussions on each of the five clusters of issues agreed to by all of us in Subsection (e)(ii) of General Assembly Decision 62/557.

Third, Mr Chairman, we find that the views of member-states has been summarized very objectively in the non-paper circulated by the distinguished President of our General Assembly (PGA), Ambassador John Ashe. The non-paper in fact follows the structure of the five broad clusters that was identified and accepted by all of us in GA Decision 62/557.

Mr Chairman,

We would like to convey, through you, our deep gratitude to the PGA for investing his time and energy to take the initiative of restoring the momentum of these inter-governmental negotiations by seeking, and I quote from his letter, “*an instrument to assist in the organization of the IGN.*” That instrument, Mr Chairman, is the non-paper circulated to all of us by the PGA. In the process, the PGA has given you the authority and guidance to move forward this process, or “organize”, the IGN.

In your letter to us, Mr Chairman, you have specifically asked us to speak at this meeting on, and I quote, “*ways in which [members] can benefit from the Non Paper as a tool to lead us towards genuine give and take, which is essential to taking the process forward*”.

Whether we call it an “instrument” or a “tool”, Mr Chairman, the non-paper deserves to be appreciated because of its status, its content, and its potential as a reference framework for our text-based negotiations.

First, Mr Chairman, its status. The non-paper has been circulated by the PGA, who has elected unanimously by all of us, and continues to enjoy our full trust and confidence. His initiative to constitute an Advisory Group was taken transparently, and within his powers as the President of the General Assembly. The terms of reference of his Advisory Group were reportedly drawn up in close interactive consultation with each of the six distinguished Permanent Representatives chosen by him, and contained amendments

and suggestions made by them, including by our distinguished colleague who has attached a dissenting note to the non-paper.

As you will no doubt recall, Mr Chairman, there has been a precedent for such an initiative by the PGA in tackling the subject of early reform of the United Nations Security Council. Five “facilitators” had been appointed by the PGA during the 61st General Assembly. These five distinguished Permanent Representatives produced a report which guided Member-States in April 2007 towards a “framework for result-oriented negotiations”. GA Decision 62/557 is a direct outcome of such an input.

Mr Chairman, the non-paper is a similar initiative by the PGA to motivate us to conclude this protracted inter-governmental negotiation.

The non-paper has been accepted and circulated by the PGA. It has his moral authority, and should not be ignored or dismissed as an irrelevant document. Especially so because both the PGA and you, Mr Chairman, have clarified that the non-paper does not have the status of a negotiation text. My delegation honours your clarifications, keeping in mind the authority and dignity of your offices.

That brings us, Mr Chairman, to the content of the non-paper. It is a summary of views expressed during the nine rounds of our negotiations so far. On the basis of a preliminary reading, we find that it is a sincere attempt by the Advisory Group, in their individual capacity, to reflect all the views that have been expressed in this process by participating Member-States so far.

The objectivity of the non-paper can be gauged by the fact that even those who have argued vigorously against the very existence of this non-paper would find their viewpoints reflected in it. Those among us who feel that the summary points of the non-paper have not brought out the finer nuances of their actual views can, in fact, correct such perceived imperfections by participating in the text-based discussions which, we hope, Mr Chairman, you will initiate from our next meeting.

This leads us to give you our view on the potential of this non-paper. Mr Chairman, my delegation has always expressed full faith in your ability and impartiality in producing a negotiation text, based on the views of member-states you have heard over the past six years in these negotiations. Your own desire to do so, in your letter of 25 July 2012, has unfortunately been subjected to an apparent “veto” by some in this room.

In this context, Mr Chairman, the non-paper has the potential to bridge this crucial gap in our negotiating process. The framework provided by the non-paper can be placed, cluster by cluster, section by section, on the screens in this hall. As our Chairman, you could invite comments on each section from the floor, making it a member-driven

process. The comments can be used to refine the language on the screen in an interactive manner, providing us with the outlines of a text-based negotiating process.

A first reading of the contents of the non-paper demonstrates that the substance of our respective positions is indeed reflected in the framework of the document. To illustrate, Section 1.a reflects the view supported by my delegation, including as a member of the G4 and L.69, and the position of many delegations from Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America, who have spoken on the need for expansion in both categories. Perhaps Section 1.d and 1.e would resonate among my distinguished colleagues from the Uniting for Consensus group! Section 2.1, we note is framed “in relation to enlargement”, and therefore does not mention what is already contained in Article 27 of the Charter, which should allay the concern expressed by distinguished colleagues from some of the permanent members of the existing Council. This illustration, Mr Chairman, is meant to show how we see the potential of the non-paper. It is indeed, as the PGA and you have said, an “instrument” or a “tool” to move us to engaging in the give-and-take of negotiations.

After nine rounds and six years of chairing this process, it is clear to you Mr Chairman that there are differences of views among member-states on each of the five clusters. Therefore, there can never be any unanimous consensus on these clusters. However, we have a unanimous mandate for “early reform” of the UN Security Council. We must accordingly move to bridge the differences through the give-and-take of negotiations on the basis of the framework provided by the non-paper.

Such a transparent process would also enable you, Mr Chairman, to determine, as the Chair of our negotiations, where you can seek consensus, based on the views of the majority of participating Member-States in these negotiations.

Mr. Chairman,

There are some in the room who feel that by launching this process of negotiations, we are in fact trying to harvest the final outcome at the very beginning of this process in a non-negotiated manner. This is not the case.

We, for one, are fully cognizant that the final outcome of our negotiations will come only from what we have always termed the “give-and-take” of our interaction. We are aware that all member-states willing to take on the additional responsibilities and obligations from participation as permanent and non-permanent members of an expanded Security Council will have to campaign, and be elected, on their individual merits under the procedures of the UN Charter.

Mr. Chairman,

Before I conclude, I would like to draw your attention to the dramatic attention the issue of UN Security Council reform has received internationally during recent weeks. This attention has come because, it has been asserted, that all the efforts made by us in recent years

“did not result in reaching the reforms required to be made to enable the Security Council to regain its desired role in the service of the issues of peace and security in the world.”²

This assertion must act as a wake-up call for all of us engaged in these negotiations. Otherwise, the malfunctioning heart of the multilateral system designed for the maintenance of international peace and security, which is the UN Security Council, will be damaged beyond repair.

We therefore call on you, Mr Chairman, to use your position and your mandate to act now, and set us on the path of actual negotiations from our next meeting itself.

² A/68/599 dated 14 November 2013