

STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON THE
SITUATION IN SOMALIA AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON DECEMBER 16, 2008

Mr President, Excellencies,

Thank you for scheduling today's open debate on the threat posed to international peace and security, and to the humanitarian situation in Somalia, by the acts of piracy in Somali territorial waters, and off the coast of Somalia. At the outset, let me express India's welcome for the adoption today by this Council of Resolution 1851, in this context.

As one of the nations that share the Arabian Sea with Somalia, India is particularly concerned by the incidents of piracy that are an unfortunate outcome of a larger and ongoing tragedy in Somalia. India endorses the need for coherent international efforts to anchor in Somali soil national and regional political processes, through an effective peacekeeping Mission, ideally, under UN leadership. A comprehensive approach that addresses the chaos that has long enveloped Somalia is the best long-term solution to the problem of piracy in Somali waters.

Nevertheless, recognizing the continuing tragedy of Somalia and our inability so far to integrate political processes in a larger peacekeeping effort cannot justify the lack of a well-coordinated response to the turmoil spilling out into the oceans. Piracy is a challenge that must be met urgently, collectively and cooperatively by the international community.

Mr President,

Piracy in Somali waters and off the coast of Somalia is an immediate challenge not only to Somalia itself and the neighbourhood, but to international commerce and finance, besides international peace and security. India is directly affected by

piracy. Attacks not only impact upon shipping to and from Indian ports and our extended neighbourhood, they also exact a heavy impact upon us, since the international merchant marine has a substantial proportion of persons of Indian origin.

It is for this reason that India has responded to the challenge of piracy at the request of, and in consultation with the Transitional Federal Government [TFG] of Somalia. Over the last two months, India has deployed two of its modern naval vessels to deal with the challenge of piracy. We have had some successes in this regard, including as recently as last weekend, but we recognize that piracy remains a significant threat. From this standpoint, India believes that the international response to piracy in Somalia needs to include the following:

- Enhanced and institutionalized coordination of international effort to deal with piracy. Not only must we institutionalize operational coordination among navies in the area, a mechanism must be set up for those involved in the anti-piracy effort to work with countries of the region in responding to the challenge. We welcome the announcement by the US Secretary of State of the decision to establish a Contact Group in this regard. India would also like to underscore the importance of ensuring a central role for the United Nations, given the international legitimacy that the UN brings, and not solely as a clearing house for the flow of information regarding anti-piracy efforts.
- Greater clarity is required as regards the legal framework of dealing with apprehended pirates. Moreover, common procedures need to be worked out to prosecute those arrested.
- There also needs to be a closer linkage between the arms embargo and the anti-piracy effort. This suggestion was made by the Monitoring Group on Somalia in its December 11 report, and we endorse it. It is important to stem the flow of weapons and to make those involved in planning, financing and enabling acts of piracy accountable, including by blocking their access to revenues generated from ransoms. This is required as payment of ransoms is encouraging further acts of piracy.
- Expansion of the capacity of Somali entities to deal with acts of piracy, both from land, where they are launched, and in Somali coastal waters.
- Other practical solutions could also be considered. In this regard, in May 2005 the Monitoring Group put forward a suggestion to establish a Caretaker Maritime Authority for Somalia. Although this had been rejected even earlier by the International Maritime Organization [IMO] after a Feasibility Study in 1998, the logic of the proposal continues to resonate as the world needs to collectively develop a practical coastline monitoring programme for Somalia.
- Finally, the international community needs the IMO to lead a process of evolving effective protection systems and strategies for merchant vessels

to adopt when navigating piracy-infested waters. This will also help reduce the burden that is currently devolving upon a limited number of naval assets in protecting a large zone of impact.

In conclusion, Excellency, let me emphasize that while there is truth in the adage that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure, we are currently beyond the phase where prevention can be contemplated. Therefore we have few options besides simultaneously attempting to deal with the symptoms and trying to cure the disease.

Thank you, Excellency.

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