

Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, at the Eighth Round of Intergovernmental Negotiations on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council (Improvement in Working Methods of the Security Council) on May 02, 2012

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman,

I took very careful note of your appeal to participants to be brief. And, I also took note that your advice came immediately after our distinguished colleague from Singapore had spoken. He described the majority as “poor and persecuted” and lamented how, for so many years, Security Council reform has been attempted but seems to be going nowhere. And now, Mr. Chairman, if you do not want the poor and the persecuted to even speak up, you don’t even want to give the dispossessed of this world a voice then, Mr. Chairman, we must wonder what it is that we are doing here? Incidentally, Mr. Chairman, the *per capita* income of Singapore is US \$45,910 which is the kind of poverty level I wish to have for all the poor countries of the world. These comments, Mr. Chairman, are offered, as you know, in lighter vein.

Mr. Chairman,

I am very happy to participate in today’s discussion. I thank the S5 Group for their presentation on the need for improvement in the working methods of the Council.

Before I proceed, let me align myself with the statement delivered by Ambassador Maria Luiza Viotti of Brazil on behalf of the G4 and by Ambassador Raymond Wolfe of Jamaica on behalf of the L69 Group.

Mr. Chairman,

I mentioned the Singaporean statement only because I think it is a very important statement. But first, about the terminology being used. The S5 had chosen to call themselves the Small Five. I have difficulty with that.

They are not small, Mr. Chairman. They are influential; very significant and influential countries. And more important, Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland are all sovereign member-states and have a good theme, that of improving the working methods of the Security Council.

And since we are operating in a multilateral setting, Mr. Chairman, where one country has one vote, we cannot accept the small and big tags. Such characterization of countries would be inappropriate in today’s discussion. The S5 deserve our appreciation for their steadfast espousal of a cause that impacts each and every one of us. It is extremely important, Mr. Chairman, that in today’s discussion we be acutely conscious of the fact that it is a sign of the troubled times that we live in that

the discussion is degenerating into not arguments but people taking positions exactly along anticipated lines. The arguments being offered indicate whether you are for change or against change; for reforms or against reforms, and, therefore, it is important to look at the kind of arguments which have been placed before this gathering.

The first argument is that the Security Council is the master of its own working methods. This is unexceptionable in itself. We have been on the Security Council since January of 2011 and we know that the working methods of the Security Council need to be improved not only for those who are not on the Council but also for those who are on the Council. I could give you any number of examples which show that the Security Council working style, its working methods leave much to be desired, sometimes even for permanent members. They are all today combining to say that it would be counterproductive but if you have a heart-to-heart chat with them, they will also admit that among the Security Council's permanent members, there is a feeling sometimes that some of them are in more effective control than others.

Then the argument was made about piecemeal proposals. I have some sympathy for that argument but I do not see how this can be counterproductive. Yes, I think the Singapore argument was an eminently wise one, that this would be a small step in that direction. Other small steps can be taken subsequently so that comprehensive reform, which we have been attempting for 20 years, can be achieved sooner than later. How can any one say that any attempt at improving and reforming working methods would be counterproductive? And then I heard another argument which I find very very interesting; that we must not put forward any proposal which is not acceptable to the P5.

Mr. Chairman,

I belong to a school of thought which believes that if you wait for the P5 to come on board on Security Council reform, we will be here till the next century because the P5, who are permanent members by virtue of a decision taken more than six decades ago, are unlikely to easily reconcile to a reformed Council. I know there are important differences among them. One of them says they are for reasonable reform; another one says that they can look at some intermediate solution. Some of them are in favour of reform but in practice are actually against reform. These positions are very difficult to reconcile.

Mr. Chairman,

I also believe that the S5 could have brought their draft resolution under agenda Item 122 dealing with the "question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council". But it is their prerogative to choose to come under any other item; under the GA or elsewhere. This is the prerogative that they have and we respect that.

GA decision 62/ 557 states that the IGN would have as its basis three aspects, namely, (i) the positions and proposals of member states, regional groupings and other groupings of member states, (ii) the five key issues, and (iii) relevant documents on the subject matter prior to adoption of the decision.

There is nothing in this decision, Mr. Chairman that says that a proposal on any one of the five key issues cannot be put to a vote on its own merit. And why would there be any such formulation since it would mean a clear violation of the rights of member-states to make proposals. Interpretations along these lines strike at the intergovernmental character of the UN General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

As you are aware, the G4 proposal of 2005 contains elaborate provisions on working methods in para 8. As clearly stated in our 2005 resolution, the proposed measures are intended to enhance the transparency, inclusiveness, legitimacy of the work of the Security Council as well as to strengthen understanding of the Council's decision by the membership of the organization thereby increasing the Council's effectiveness. These proposals include:

(i) For the Council to meet, as a general rule, in public forum open to all member states of the UN.

(ii) Implement Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter by consulting with non Security Council members on a regular basis.

(iii) Enhance access to subsidiary organs of the Council for making available to non-members of the Council relevant documents at an early stage.

(iv) Holding frequent, timely and qualitative briefings for non members.

(v) Holding regular and timely consultations with TCCs and countries that contribute financial resources etc. to peace keeping operations.

(vi) Regular consultations with the PGA and the President of the ECOSOC.

(vii) Providing detailed, substantive and comprehensive evaluation of the Council's work as per Articles 15(1) and 24(3) of the Charter.

(viii) Submitting when necessary special reports to the Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

The L69 Group also attaches great importance to improving the working methods of the Council. The group has called for comprehensive improvement that should, *inter alia*, address the issue of enhanced access and transparency to non members, full

implementation of Articles 31 & 32 and involvement of TCCs in decision making on all aspects of PKOs.

I am happy to see that the S5 has shown convergence in the text with the proposals from the G4 and the L69.

Mr. Chairman,

Since 1 January last year, we have been serving as a non-permanent member of the Council. We, therefore, have firsthand experience of the issues involved. We have been actively engaged in the deliberations of the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions.

We have also articulated some specific points on the subject in the Council.

First, that the Council's consideration of issues should be rationalized so that issues do not come for consideration so often and routinely as to bog down the limited time that the Council has at its disposal. Equally, we need to consider the advisability of retaining issues for decades on end, if there is no interest in them.

Two, Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter must be fully implemented, by consulting with non-Security Council members on a regular basis, especially members with a special interest in the substantive matter under consideration by the Council.

Three, non-members must be given systematic access to subordinate organs of the UNSC, including the right to participate.

Four, participation of Troop and Police Contributing Countries in decision making of peacekeeping operations must cover the establishment, conduct, review and termination of peacekeeping operations, including the extension and change of mandates, as well as for specific operational issues.

Five, countries having specific interest in a particular agenda-item must be consulted before an outcome document on that item is adopted.

Six, the Council should concentrate its time and efforts on dealing with issues concerning its primary responsibility of international peace and security as mandated by the UN Charter, rather than encroaching upon the mandate of the General Assembly.

Seven, before mandating measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council should first make serious efforts for pacific settlements of disputes through measures under Chapter VI. In this connection, the Council must also improve its cooperation with regional organizations, particularly with the African Union, since a large volume of the Council's work concern the African continent. Such cooperation must be serious and include providing assistance for the AU's capacity building as per their

requirement and not just when it is convenient or fashionable. In addition, we support systematic association of non-permanent members in pen holding. It will not come as a surprise, Mr. Chairman, that the pen holding is done by very very few members of the Council and that also by very few even amongst the permanent members.

Mr. Chairman,

There may be a philosophical divide between how we approach the issue of improvement in working methods and how the S5 approaches it. The S5 appears to be convinced that improvement in working methods of the Council can be attempted and achieved without perhaps a comprehensive reform of the Security Council *per se*. Be that as it may, and that philosophical difference notwithstanding, we will still support the S5 proposal even though we continue to believe that the two must go hand-in-hand.

Therefore, I conclude by saying that the Indian delegation welcomes the S5 initiative and look forward to hearing about the S5's future plans in this regard. I do not think they are small, Mr. Chairman, and I think they have all the strength of arguments on their side. I hope they do not succumb to any suggestion which says let us set up a working party. I would recommend to them to go ahead and proceed to test the strength of those arguments.

Thank you.

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