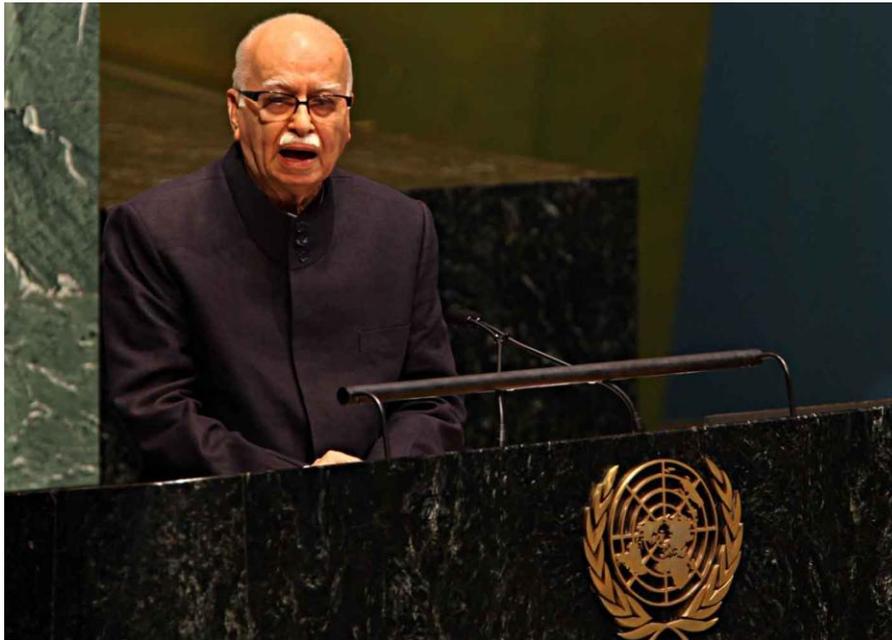


STATEMENT BY MR. L K ADVANI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION AT THE JOINT DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEMS 115: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS & AGENDA ITEM 116: REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE 67TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 11, 2012

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of the 67th session of the UN General Assembly. You carry an enormous responsibility on your shoulders. I wish you the very best for the year ahead.



Mr. President,

Many of us with long living memories thought that the decade that ended in 2010 was the most challenging the international community had witnessed since the Second World War.

But today we know better.

Never before has the need for enduring calm and certainty in international relations been felt as ardently as in the last few years.

The political upheaval in West Asia, the Gulf and North Africa that began in early 2011 and I feel is still continuing is unprecedented both in terms of scale and impact.

The on-going global financial and economic crisis beginning in the developed world and spreading southwards has exposed the downside of globalization and seriously undermined the Cold War era structures of global governance.

Mr. President,

Our responses to the most challenging socio-political and economic crises of the last fifty years cannot be patchy and half-hearted.

The process should begin here at the UN and must be guided by a sense of urgency.

Mr. President, today itself I was listening to you very carefully when you made your introductory remarks. And I fully agreed with what you said about the urgency of what you propose to do about it today. To quote you, you said this morning “I’m afraid that we are confronted with the choice of either adapting to the new times, or simply being left behind to watch the gap between our duties and our capabilities widen by the day. I am not advocating haste or revolution” you said, Mr. President, “but I am trying to instill a sense of urgency.”

The on-going global financial and economic crisis is certainly asking us to do this immediately.

First and foremost, the deficit in global governance must be addressed. The Security Council of the United Nations with a structure and a set of governing norms that harkens back to the realities of the late 1940s I stress is an anachronism.

In order to make the Security Council reflective of current geopolitical realities, it needs to be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. A reformed Council must include countries that are willing to bear additional burdens relating to the maintenance of international peace and security and be able to sustain worldwide campaigns against new and emerging global threats including terrorism and piracy.

This is exactly what you stressed when you said that the gap between our duties and our capabilities are widening by the day.

Next, we need to revitalize the General Assembly.

We need to change it from a mere talk shop to a place where transnational issues that impact each and every one of us are addressed swiftly and truly global solutions prescribed.

We are therefore appreciative of the importance that you, Mr. President, have attached to this issue.

You told member-states on the first day of the current General Assembly session on 18 September 2012 and I quote “To revitalize this most universal of multilateral institutions is to renew our faith not only in the UN’s programs and purposes, but also in each other. The Member States can count on me” you said, “to assist and facilitate in advancing the revitalization agenda, including the Security Council reform process.”

We welcome your resolve. You can count on India’s support in this regard.

Mr. President,

The starting point of my delegation’s position is the firm belief that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations is respected both in letter and spirit.

The Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restoring the centrality of the United Nations in formulating multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues. In particular, revitalization must restore the primacy of the UN in development matters.

Mr. President,

Without prejudging the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group that should start soon, I would like to place on record the Indian delegation’s considered views on the two agenda items under consideration today.

I listened very carefully to your introductory remarks. I fully agree with what you said about the need for urgency

First of all, it is critical that we establish a relationship of respect for respective mandates between the General Assembly and the Security Council in the spirit of the Charter. The Council should not encroach upon the mandate of the Assembly through extremely wide and permissive interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression and to the situations under which it can take action under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The Assembly’s competence in areas such as the process of standard-setting and codification of international law must also be scrupulously respected.

It is clear that the Council’s agenda is, to say the least, overburdened because it has anointed itself with the responsibility of dealing with issues, which though seemingly important, leave it with less time to deal with the real hotspots that constitute the real threats to international peace and security. The balance between the General Assembly and the Council is only one of the dimensions of what needs to be addressed.

Second, the Assembly we believe must have a greater say in the process of selection of the Secretary General. The continued circumscribing of the Assembly's role and responsibilities in the process of selection and appointment of the Secretary General needs to change in the interests of the United Nations system in general and the Assembly's prerogatives in particular.

We could also identify objective criteria for the candidatures, including commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, extensive leadership, administrative and diplomatic experience with due regard being given to regional rotation and gender equality.

Equally useful and practical would be to encourage formal presentation of candidatures in a manner that allows sufficient time for interaction with member-states, and also requires candidates to present their views to all member-states of the General Assembly.

Thirdly, the Assembly and the other entities that form part of the UN system must reflect diplomatic best practices in its day to day functioning. And it has a lot to learn from member-states in this regard.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me re-emphasize the need to discuss substantive measures that would strengthen the role of General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the international community.

The General Assembly can expect India's constructive support and participation in these efforts.

I thank you again, Mr. President.

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