

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SINGH PURI, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE, BRIEFING ON NEW CHALLENGES TO INTERNATIONAL  
PEACE AND SECURITY AT THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL ON  
NOVEMBER 23, 2011

Mr. President,

Allow me, at the outset, to express appreciation to you, Foreign Minister Paulo Portas, and to your delegation for organizing today's meeting.

Our thanks are also due to the Secretary General, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Director General of WHO and the Executive Director of UNODC for their briefings.

I also note with appreciation the presence of the Ministers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil and Colombia.

Mr. President,

The UN was established in the aftermath of the chaos created by the two world wars with the avowed aim of saving "succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

In 1945, the international community decided to entrust the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The UN Charter itself prescribed the trigger mechanism for collective action by the Security Council. The departure point for such action is contained in Article 39 which states that the Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression.

In other words, the fundamental pre-occupation of the Security Council was the management of war and peace essentially within the paradigm of inter-state relations.

Mr. President,

The UN Charter was signed 66 years ago. As with all living documents, the Charter provides circumscribing limits, but encourages member-states to undertake sufficient innovations to deal with emerging situations.

The evolution of the UN's peacekeeping agenda and its transformation over the years in response to the changing international environment is testimony to the

UN's versatility. Peacekeeping fleshed out the essence of multilateralism by pooling the resources of the many for the benefit of the whole.

That, in time, UN peacekeepers found their mandates expanding to include protection agendas in intra-state conflicts only speak volumes of their utility and resilience.

While such roles are critically important, they do not and cannot detract from the fact that the essential function of the Council is to address matters of imminent threats to international peace and security.

Mr. President,

Your delegation had circulated a concept note in preparation of this meeting. The note listed several areas of possible threats to the maintenance of international peace and security.

One of the areas mentioned is climate change and possible impacts of migration on peace and security.

The UN has a framework convention with a tool box of ways and means of addressing climate change. None of these are available in the Security Council. In fact, the real requirement for addressing climate change is rooted in the need for collaboration and not through imposition of punitive measures.

This in and of itself makes it imperative that discussions on climate change be carried out where the necessary wherewithal rests. In fact, major negotiations have been underway for several years under the UNFCCC and we should not seek to either duplicate or in any way detract from them.

Another area mentioned is that of global pandemics. These, too, like climate change demand collaborative approaches and not finger pointing or punitive action. The sad reality however is that we as the international community have shown little appetite for collaboration and sharing. Instead, not only are we not willing to share the benefits of technological developments, such as drugs at affordable prices, but we have also seen hurdles being placed on developing countries sharing their own know-how and products among themselves.

Mr. President,

It is imperative that the Council remain strong in its fight against terrorism.

Transnational organized crime and its veritable nexus with drug, human and arms trafficking are well established. Their strong operational linkages with

terrorists groups have become symbiotic in nature. Terrorist financing, illicit money laundering and illegal arms sale remain intertwined in a complex web of toxic relationship.

Further, the risk of WMDs falling into the hands of terrorists presents a grave security challenge to the international community.

Another area we need to be extremely careful are the possibilities that emanate as a result of the misuse of cyberspace and related technologies by terrorists and their supporters.

Mr. President,

In recent months, we have seen concerted attempts to enlarge the scope of work and responsibility of the Council. We do not favor this discordant trend both as a matter of propriety and pragmatism.

The UN Charter gives a clear responsibility to the Security Council on matters of international peace and security but makes it amply clear that issues of social and economic significance are to be dealt by the UN General Assembly.

An unequivocal distinction between these two set of functions have so far helped in the smooth functioning of the UN system. Any digression from the Charter rules is likely to create dysfunction.

From the functional point of view as well, burdening the Council with increasing number of global challenges premised on their perceived interconnectedness with threat to peace and security is self defeating.

It also distracts the Council from its core mandate and from attending to matters that is its primary responsibility.

Mr. President,

More than three-fourths of the agenda of the Security Council is dominated by African issues. And, in Africa we now have the African Union evolving into a mature organization whose leadership is willing to take on increased responsibility for managing Africa's affairs. In addition, there are also the regional groupings in Africa.

The challenge before us is to learn to work in real collaboration with the AU and the regional organizations in Africa in the furtherance of peace and security in the continent.

This real collaboration means listening to our colleagues from Africa, dialoguing with them and being there for assisting them as per their requirement in resolving conflicts and not just when it is convenient or fashionable. It also does not mean imposing a world-view.

In this connection, it is worth noting that the piracy off the coast of Somalia is a major threat to international peace and security. The Council must enhance further the level of international cooperation to counter this threat and seriously act in the recommendations of the African Union in this regards.

Mr. President,

Today we live in an intensely inter-connected world defined as it were by profound changes in science, revolutions in communications and information technologies besides warfare techniques and globalization.

In our view, the most important challenge to international peace and security and conflict prevention is that our platform for global governance in this area, namely the Security Council, is no longer reflective of contemporary reality.

A composition rooted in 1945 detracts from its abilities to fully harness the capabilities of UN Member-States as of today and the continuation of applying methods of coercion from an era gone by rather than look for newer approaches involving collaborative action.

Thank you, Mr. President.

BACK TO SECURITY COUNCIL