

**STATEMENT BY MR. KAMALESH SHARMA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON QUESTION OF
EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY
COUNCIL AND RELATED MATERS (AGENDA ITEM 49) ON OCTOBER 30, 2001**

Mr. President,

We are once again collected to debate the obvious. There is general agreement that the Security Council needs to be reformed and enlarged in order to make it more representative of the general membership and enable it to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations more effectively and with greater credibility and legitimacy. However, the devil lies in the detail. Deliberations in the General Assembly and in its Open-ended Working Group to consider all aspects of the question of increase in membership of the Security Council and to effectively address other matters related to reform of the Council over the last eight years have failed to arrive at a comprehensive package acceptable to everyone.

2. We were encouraged by the broad support that this subject generated during the Millennium Summit, the general debate and subsequent consideration of this subject under the relevant agenda item during the 55th session of the General Assembly. Our Heads of State and Government, in the Millennium Declaration, have directed us to intensify efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. In the follow up to the Millennium Summit, we must discharge the enormous responsibility placed upon us in this regard and address this vital issue with all the commitment and seriousness it deserves.

3. The tragic events of September 11 have dramatically coalesced world opinion in a common resolve to comprehensively combat the evil menace of terrorism in all its manifestations. The Security Council has, through Resolution 1373, undertaken the ambitious and laudable task to root out this pernicious scourge root and branch. Its Committee on Counter-Terrorism has begun to address this issue in a serious and meaningful manner. We commend the Council for acting with alacrity. As a country that has been the victim for many years of this grave assault on the cherished ideals of freedom, democracy and pluralism, we wish the Council all success in this crucial responsibility towards the global community. We can not afford to fail in this critical endeavour.

Mr. President,

4. In countering threats to international peace and security, the importance of the role of the Security Council cannot be over-emphasised. An unrepresentative and anachronistic Council that does not reflect current global realities would find it extremely difficult, notwithstanding its worthy intentions, to effectively and credibly tackle this momentous challenge to international peace and security. Moreover, it is clear that the focus of the Council's actions, as in the past, would be overwhelmingly developing countries and the impact of the Council's actions would be almost entirely felt in the developing world. This only reinforces the imperative of enlarging the membership of the Council in both categories to make it more representative of the general membership and in particular the vast majority of developing countries. We would like to reiterate that a comprehensive package, which includes expansion of the Council's membership, improvement in its working method and reform of its decision-making process, is the only way to proceed. This would equip the Security Council to confront the grave challenges that confront the international community in the twenty-first century.

5. We have had the opportunity to outline India's position on Security Council restructuring on several occasions in the past. However, we would like to caution against a temptation to resort to piecemeal and partial solutions. After striving for over eight years if we were to agree to an expansion of the Security Council in the non-permanent category only or if we were to make cosmetic changes in its working methods, we would be doing a disservice not only to ourselves but to the Organisation as a whole. Instead of addressing the main issues we would be shying away from them and thereby perpetuating an international system characterised by inequity.

6. We should avoid the seemingly simpler option of promoting agreement only on those issues on which a broad meeting of minds may emerge. Cluster I and Cluster II issues are equally important and need to be considered together. NAM has consistently held the view that expansion and reform of the Security Council should be integral parts of a common package. Any attempts to promote one at the expense of the other would not only contravene the NAM position but would also go against the mandate of the General Assembly to consider all aspects of this issue.

7. A large number of delegations, including ours, have made suggestions pertaining to the working methods of the Council during the debate on the Report of the Council held earlier this month. We would not like to repeat them here. It is our expectation that these suggestions would be considered and the improvements required affected.

Mr. President,

8. While debating the issue of Security Council reform, one cannot but comment on the manner in which the Council mandates peacekeeping operations, a highly visible manifestation of this Organisation's attempts to maintain international peace and security. It is most regrettable that one of the basic flaws in UN peacekeeping is the absence of a genuine partnership between the Security Council and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). This is further accentuated by the fact that very few Council members are major troop contributors. Complex and dangerous operations like those in the DRC and Sierra Leone and the one being envisaged for Burundi cannot succeed in the absence of cooperation with the TCCs. The unfortunate incidents in Sierra Leone last year should have galvanised the Council to take appropriate measures.

9. While recognising that Security Council Resolutions 1327 and 1353 seek to address this problem, this is simply not enough. The Brahimi Panel made a specific recommendation in this regard in paragraph 61 of its Report. A number of TCCs have amplified on this particular recommendation and submitted proposals to the Council. We are grateful to Singapore for having resurrected the need for strengthening cooperation with TCCs and brought it to the forefront of the Council's agenda. We would like to also commend Ambassador Curtis Ward of Jamaica for his untiring efforts as Chairman of the Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations in trying to get the Working Group to focus on the proposals made by TCCs. The status quo should not be sought to be preserved on the specious plea that existing mechanisms suffice. Those charged with the responsibility for peace and security would hopefully both contribute troops for peacekeeping and ensure a culture of consultations with troop contributors that is just and which contributes meaningfully to the decision-making process that impacts directly on the lives of their troops serving the United Nations. Mr. President, this is an anomaly that must be seriously and meaningfully addressed lest the disenchantment of troop contributors leaves the Council with little else but the holding of mostly pointless thematic debates.

10. We would like to reiterate our conviction that any increase in permanent membership should be guided by objective, and not subjective, selective or arbitrary criteria and that all new permanent members should be designated together by the General Assembly, which is the only forum which can elect them. In this regard there should be no restrictions imposed on the role or authority of the General Assembly.

11. We would like to commend Mr. Harri Holkeri, the former President of the General Assembly, for his personal contribution in trying to focus discussions on Security Council reform in the Open-ended Working Group. His very pertinent remarks at the concluding session of the 55th General Assembly on this issue could guide us in our subsequent deliberations. His initiative in writing to Foreign Ministers of member states on this important subject is particularly praiseworthy. It would be very useful if the replies received from member states are brought out in a compendium before the OEWG commences its work next year.

12. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said at the Millennium Summit that “as the world’s largest democracy, with enormous potential, rapidly growing economic power and a major contributor to peacekeeping operations, India has a natural claim to a permanent seat in the UN Security Council”. India has consistently contributed to all aspects of the Organisation’s work. We believe that on any objective grounds India would be considered as qualified for permanent membership of an expanded Security Council, whenever the membership finds this decision posed before it.

Mr. President,

13. It is imperative that discussions on Security Council reform continue in a sustained and meaningful manner. There is no reason for pessimism even though agreement in vital areas continues to elude us even after eight years of protracted negotiations. We look forward to continuing our discussions in the Open-ended Working Group next year.