

Intervention by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the informal meeting (closed) of the plenary on the 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, on 28 June 2010, New York.

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you very much for giving me the floor.

Today's key issue, namely "regional representation" has particular relevance in the contemporary international system. I say this because of the sheer inability of the UN system to grasp the significance of the changes in the international landscape since World War II.

In this context, I am reminded of the prescient remarks of His Excellency President Nicolas Sarkozy during this keynote address at Columbia University in March this year. He said and I quote,

*"Do you young students at Columbia know that not a single African country is a permanent member of the Security Council? [And yet the continent has] a billion inhabitants!"*

*Do you know that not a single Arab country—[although the Arab world has] about a hundred million inhabitants—is a permanent member of the Security Council?"*

*Do you know that India—with a billion inhabitants, and becoming the world's most populous nation in 30 years' time—is not a permanent member of the Security Council?"*

*That Japan, the world's second-largest economy, is not a permanent member of the Security Council? Why? Because 60 years ago they lost the war. Is that reasonable?"*

*Do you know that not a single Latin American country is a permanent member of the Security Council?"*

*How can anyone expect us to resolve major crises, major wars and major conflicts within the framework of the UN without Africa, without three-quarters of Asia, without Latin America, without a single Arab country? Is that reasonable? Is that sensible? Is it even imaginable? Who can believe that?"Unquote.*

Mr. Chairman,

If we want to be judged fairly by our succeeding generations, I believe we must rise up to the occasion in addressing these anomalies.

The UN Charter is unambiguous in providing for permanent members by name and not by rotating nomination by regional organizations. This should serve as our guide on the issue of regional representation.

Permanent members are expected to act in such a manner that transcends narrow national interests when dealing with issues relating to international peace and security. It is, therefore, important that the category of permanent membership reflect contemporary realities and include adequate representation from all regions of the world.

Non-permanent members must also bring to bear similar qualities not encumbered by limited and short-term national or regional considerations. But here we have the possibility to look for innovative solutions that ensure representation of cross regional groups such as the AOSIS on the Security Council on a regular basis.

Mr. Chairman,

The various proposals under the heading of 'regional representation' in the negotiation text bear the imprint of the relevant Charter provisions. It also reflects the general thinking of the international community in this regard. It therefore lends itself to revision without any major difficulties.

The large middle ground consists of four areas of convergence.

First, is the call for additional permanent seats - two from Africa and Asia, at-least one from GRULAC and one for WEOG. Additionally, there are calls for more non-permanent seats for all existing regional groups.

Second, most of the proposals call for continuing with the existing categories of regional groupings, namely Africa, Asia, GRULAC, WEOG and EEG. Proposals that call for enhanced representation in the Council on the basis of other groupings could also be suitably reflected in Rev 2.

Third, the concept of ‘equitable geographical distribution’ finds traction across the wide spectrum of proposals

Fourth, in terms of the criteria for enhancing representation in the Council, there is a clamour for more developing countries in both categories of membership. Further, the aspect of ‘contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to other purposes of the organization’ finds wide acceptance. Other criterion such as “country specific qualifications”; “representation of different civilizations and cultures”; “rotation”; and “sub-regional representation” have also been proposed.

Mr. Chairman,

It is the view of my delegation that Rev 2 could merge the relevant portions under this key issue of “regional representation” on the basis of the provisions of the UN Charter making use of the four convergences that I have just mentioned.

We further believe that the Chair should eliminate those options that do not reflect the middle-ground. If this is not feasible, at least we should be able to quantify the support that different options have received, either in the body of the text or in footnotes.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate that the Indian delegation is willing to work with other delegations in a spirit of flexibility and compromise in order to shorten the text.

Thank you.

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