

Statement by Mr. Devesh Uttam, First secretary at the first thematic meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the ‘Role and Authority of the General Assembly’ on March 19, 2015

Mr. Co-Chairs,

Thank you for convening this important meeting to discuss the ‘role and authority of the General Assembly’.

At the outset I would like to align myself with the statement made by distinguished representative of Algeria on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Co-Chairs

We sincerely appreciate your hard work and that of the Secretariat for issuing an updated inventory/chart of resolutions on revitalization pursuant to the last session resolution 68/307 . However, a close look into this chart reveals that much remains to be done to enhance the role and effectiveness of this august body though several steps have been taken in this regard.

In the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group held on 3rd of this month we had reiterated our view 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 resolve transnational issues. In particular, revitalization must restore the primacy of the UN in development matters.

As the United Nations chief deliberative, legislative, policy-making and representative body, it also needs to be relevant to contemporary realities.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

Over the years, it has been amply demonstrated that the prerogatives and authority of the General Assembly have been undermined by the Security Council. The Council should stop its frequent attempts to redefine its scope of competence through wider and permissive interpretations of what constitutes a threat to international peace and security and including issues that clearly fall within the purview of the General Assembly or the ECOSOC.

It is important for us to establish a relationship of respect for respective mandates between the General Assembly and the Security Council in the spirit of the Charter.

Mr. Co Chairs,

The Assembly will not be empowered merely by strengthening procedures. More important is the presence of political will to take concrete measures to reinforce the role and authority of the Assembly.

In our view, the primacy of the Assembly flows from the universality of its membership as well as the diligent application of the principle of sovereign equality of all its members. Ownership therefore, of the Assembly's decisions and activities, is reflected in the degree of participation by member-states. Therefore, it is important that the member-states should engage in substantive deliberations in the six main committees that could result in setting new norms instead of spending considerable time and resources on procedural issues.

Mr. Co Chairs,

In conclusion, let me assure my delegation's continued support in your efforts to further the goal of revitalizing the General Assembly.

Thank you.