

STATEMENT BY DR. ASHWANI KUMAR, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
& MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION ON THE OPEN DEBATE ON
SECURITY COUNCIL WORKING METHODS ON OCTOBER 29, 2013

Mr. President,

Let, me at the outset, thank you for convening this open debate on Working Methods of the Security Council. I also thank your delegation for authoring the concept note which gives a perspective on the various issues being discussed under the broad rubric of the working methods. I would also like to put on record our deep appreciation of Ambassador María Cristina Perceval's stewardship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Procedural Questions during the year 2013.



Mr. President,

In the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, Heads of States and Governments supported early reform of the Security Council and recommended that the Council continue to adapt its working methods to the exigencies and imperatives of a vastly altered global order. It is a matter of regret that so far very little has been done to achieve either of these mandates.

Mr. President,

As the primary organ of the UN system for maintenance of international peace and security, working methods of the Council are of interest to the entire international community. As the concept note has rightly mentioned, issues of transparency, interaction with non-members of the Council, Troop and Police Contributing Countries and relevant United Nation bodies are important for the overall efficiency of the Council and need to be addressed urgently.

Mr. President,

I would like to briefly share India's perspective on how the Security Council could improve upon its performance. Let me start with a quote from the famous writer-poet Victor Marie Hugo, who said, "There is nothing stronger than an idea whose time has come". Reform of the Security Council in tune with the contemporary realities is an idea whose time has come. The permanent members of the Security Council must recognize, not only individually but also collectively, that the Council must be reformed to make it reflect the contemporary realities of the international system.

It is self-evident that the expansion of the Security Council reflecting the contemporary geopolitical realities would improve its representative character and grant greater legitimacy and credibility to its decisions.

Also, the improvement of Security Council's working methods would enhance the Council's effectiveness and efficiency. We strongly believe that real improvements in the working methods need change in both the process and approach, which require reform of the composition of the Council.

Mr. President,

The most important change required in the working methods is to make them transparent and inclusive. The Security Council needs to increase access to documentation and information and curb the tendency to hold closed meetings having no records. What is worse is the practice of taking decisions among the P-5 to the exclusion of other Council members as was seen just last month on an important issue of international peace and security.

Mr. President,

During the last few years, my delegation has strongly supported efforts in the Informal Working Group aimed at improvements in the Council's working methods. Some specific suggestions include the following:

One, the Council should amend its procedures so that items do not remain on its agenda permanently.

Two, the reporting cycle should be practical and result-oriented so that issues do not come for consideration just as a matter of routine, putting pressure on the limited time Council has at its disposal.

Three, Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter must be fully implemented, by consulting with non-Security Council members on a regular basis, especially members with a special interest in the substantive matter under consideration by the Council. There is a need to strengthen the trend of meeting more often in public, including through holding public briefings and debates.

Four, 'penholders' should allow greater and systematic participation of elected members as 'co-penholders'.

Five, non-members should be given systematic access to subsidiary bodies of the UNSC, including the right to participate.

Six, participation of Troop and Police Contributing Countries in decision making concerning peacekeeping operations must cover the establishment, conduct, review and termination of peacekeeping operations, including the extension and change of mandates, as well as for specific operational issues.

Seven, there is a need to ensure more informative annual SC reporting to the GA.

Eight, the Council should concentrate its time and efforts on dealing with issues concerning its primary responsibility concerning international peace and security as mandated by the UN Charter, rather than encroaching upon the mandate of the General Assembly and other UN organs.

Nine, before mandating measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council should first make serious efforts for pacific settlements of disputes through measures under Chapter VI.

Mr. President

In conclusion, let me reiterate India's considered view that genuine reform in the working methods of the Security Council requires a comprehensive reform in the membership of the Council, with expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories, and not only improvement in its working procedures. This is essential both for the credibility and continued confidence of the international community in this institution. It is our sincere expectation that these ideas will be pursued by Council members so that views expressed by the wider UN member-states find resonance in the Council's work and working methods.

Thank you.

BACK TO SECURITY COUNCIL