

Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the Eighth Round of 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 13 March 2012

Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by welcoming your decision to convene today's meeting. At the outset, I would like to align myself with the statement made by Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, my distinguished colleague from Jamaica and the Spokesperson of the L69 Group. I also subscribe to the G4 statement made by our colleague from Germany.

Mr. Chairman,

Since I am taking the floor immediately after the representative of Malta, who began by asking a question as to how the L69 proposal would benefit the 114 smaller states, let me just remind him that the S5 had convened a meeting with the members of the G4, if I remember, at the Singapore Mission when this process started.

And on that occasion I had provided, along with my colleagues from G4, what I had then regarded as a most comprehensive answer. Since then, this specious argument of how expansion in both categories is not as good as expansion only in the non-permanent category had not re-surfaced till today.

Clearly, composition of delegations change and I could spend another 15 minutes reiterating the earlier arguments but then I would be taking up the valuable time I had intended to use to make other points of a basic nature. I will confine myself to these.

If my colleague from Malta is interested, I can get one of my colleagues to respond to him when we come to the question and answer segment. And I hope after we do this today, we will not be treated to a rehash of the same argument.

Mr. Chairman,

The L69 should more appropriately be described as the "Friends of Security Council reform" or "All weather friends of the IGN process" - a group of 41 developing countries from different regions that is cemented in its firm conviction that expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership of the Security Council is needed to better reflect contemporary world realities and achieve a more accountable, representative and transparent Security Council.

I am worried. These days all these terms accountable, representative and transparent are used with equal ease by those who want reform and those who don't want any movement on reform. But I will come to that in a minute.

This group, Mr. Chairman, has been in the vanguard of the process for Security Council reform. It was instrumental, I believe, Mr. Chairman, in encouraging the commencement of your current process as well.

The L69 group's letter of 6 September last year to you reiterated our firm and considered stand on the way forward in the Inter-Governmental Negotiations which had reached an impasse on 2 March last year. We had even then clearly expressed our support for Rev3. We extended support because we are a reform-minded delegation, dedicated to early reform of the Security Council to make it reflective of the realities of today. It was our considered view that the natural progression in an Inter Governmental Negotiation is always from a longer to a shorter document that lends itself more easily to give and take among delegations and groups. That continues to be our position.

Mr. Chairman,

During the last GA session, the Inter Governmental Negotiating process was distracted by two entirely avoidable processes. The L69 initiative, we believe, successfully addressed both.

First, were the arguments which we are hearing again today by those who are opposed to reform about what we call "un-United Nations" like principles such as "more than the narrow two-thirds majority" and "subsidiarity" that were relayed from outside this process and repeated *ad nauseam* by some.

The two-thirds majority requirement, Mr. Chairman, comes from the Charter. The L69 group and its initiative made it clear that contrary to such alien formulations, Council reform would have to be guided by the UN Charter, relevant rules of procedure of the GA and other GA resolutions and I believe, Mr. Chairman, we are on the verge of succeeding.

The second distraction was the friends of the former PGA and allied conferences that sought to impose a solution from the outside. The irony was that the very same delegations who rejected your Inter Governmental Negotiating process as represented by an evolving negotiation text were the ones holding the candle for bringing in solutions alien to the Charter and from processes outside the IGN.

Let me turn now to the third aspect of our initiative which was essentially an outreach undertaken by a wide coalition of member states on the proposition calling for reform comprising an expansion of the Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and improvement in its working methods. The outreach initiative took, as its starting point, your own assessment in September 2009 that the reform model seeking an expansion in both categories "commanded the most support from the delegations taking the floor". The initiative did not seek to impose a solution as is being suggested by some of our colleagues. Rather, it attempted to encourage dialogue and discussion.

The initiative did not follow any so-called “artificial timelines” even though the process has been continuing now for 20 years. And one would be tempted to ask the rhetorical question if 20 years is not enough, how many more years are required. Another 20 or, as I had enquired in a previous intervention, another world war? These are the questions we have to address.

Mr. Chairman,

Our initiative is concrete, clear, simple and straightforward and in language that is consistent with the UN Charter. It maintains an unambiguous distinction between process and substance. The initiative is, therefore, completely in accordance with the parameters laid down in GA resolution 62/557 which established the Inter Governmental Negotiations and other relevant resolutions.

The results of the outreach indicate that this proposition, Mr. Chairman, enjoys broad support from delegations across various regions. To date, an overwhelming majority of delegations have signaled their support for this proposition. The signatories may only be close to 90 but there are another 50 countries which have signaled their willingness to support this proposition, if not to cosponsor it.

Mr. Chairman,

The principles captured in the proposition are simple and straightforward. These are principles which enjoy strong support among the UN membership. In our view, therefore, the Inter Governmental Negotiations should continue its work on the basis of these principles.

We could even adopt the short resolution as a GA resolution. It does not necessitate a Charter amended. In fact, its adoption will articulate the general membership’s resolve to engage in good faith negotiations on the basis of these principles. The proposition is inclusive. It is an invitation to all UN member states to work towards early realization of Security Council reform.

Delegations with other points of view including that of my distinguished colleague from Indonesia who spoke earlier and who preferred an intermediate solution and other members of the UfC who have problems with expansion in both categories should put their positions into resolutions so that we can weigh the relative merits of no expansion in permanent categories, an intermediate solution and the short resolution which is before us.

Mr. Chairman,

I also want to address some questions that have been addressed to us.

The distinguished representative of Spain enquired whether the G4 and the L69 positions are identical and I will come to that in a minute.

But let me start with the veto. We have heard the provenance and the historical justifications for the veto. We have been told in earlier meetings, hinted at today, that the general refrain of the P5 always is the linkage with the world war. In other words, to the victors belong the spoils and that permanent membership was not acquired, as one permanent member said, from a lottery.

We firmly believe, Mr. Chairman, that reform of the Security Council will be incomplete if the issue of the veto, in all its aspects, is not properly addressed. On a number of occasions we have said this and we have expressed our understanding of these aspects.

The veto vests, Mr. Chairman, in specified nation states. For instance, the five veto wielders are mentioned in Article 23 of the UN Charter. If any country other than the P5 desires to be vested with the veto, we are naturally willing to consider these aspirations.

The G4 position of 2005 is clear that all new permanent members will have the same responsibilities and obligations as the current permanent members. This is contained, Mr. Chairman, for those who keep asking us as to what the G4 position is, in para 5 (a) of document A/59/L.64. I am not aware of the G4 ever having changed that position. However, in para 5(b) of the document that I have quoted - L.64 - it says that this will not be operationalized till the issue has been resolved in a review, 15 years later. Seven of those 15 years, Mr. Chairman, have already elapsed.

The African Group, on the other hand, is against the veto *per se*. But it insists that it be extended to new permanent members if it continues to remain with existing permanent members. Now, if you want to read a contradiction in this, you are welcome to do so. But we are in a negotiating process and I think we should not allow any false miasma to cloud our understanding of what is happening here.

Now, let me add, Mr. Chairman, that my understanding is that with each passing day, the cost of exercising a veto is rising tremendously. In the last 67 years, the veto has been used 267 times. It is interesting to note that the veto has been used so often for matters which have nothing to do with the maintenance of international peace and security. They have been used, for instance, on many occasions to block the applications for UN membership by new states. Even in the last few years, the cost imposed on the P5 countries using the veto has been enormous. In one recent instance, domestic compulsions forced a veto in respect of “illegal” settlements. There is no need to elaborate in depth on the Syrian situation since the memory is fresh in our minds. In short, anguished introspection is integral to the process leading to the use of the veto.

Of course, if the argument is that expansion of veto is required as a matter of aspiration associated with “equity and justice” considerations, we should discuss this. But my appeal is that we should not let the issue of veto become a millstone around our necks.

And one comment, insofar as my colleague from Spain is concerned, who asked are the G4 and L69 positions identical. I have explained in some detail what the G4 position on the veto is and what I understand to be the L69 position and what I think is the African position.

But then, he went on to ask a question which I found amusing, namely how is it that two members of the G4 can be members of the L69? Now, how is it that there is one G4 member in the EU-one which is eminently deserving of permanent membership, two current permanent members and some major UfC countries in the EU all at the same time? Have I ever asked how is it possible for these 27 countries to coexist? I do not ask those questions because I think, apart from it not being a question of deep philosophy, I think it is everyone's right whether you want to swing one way or the other. This is a negotiation. We have to find convergence in our positions.

Mr. Chairman,

India is a member of two groupings devoted to early reform of the Council, namely, the G4 and the L69. The positions of these groups have a number of common elements with each group and the other group and member states who have made proposals on the subject. We are keen to enhance our convergence with such other like-minded groups during this General Assembly session, in particular, with the African group whose aspirations we support.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that India is of the view that reform and expansion of the Council are essential if it is to reflect cotemporary realities. Those of us who want to live in the immediate aftermath of the post-Second World War situation are welcome to do so. Such an outcome, Mr. Chairman, of reform will enhance the Council's credibility, effectiveness in dealing with global issues. Early reform of the Security Council must, therefore, be pursued with renewed vigour and must be urgently enacted. And I thank you for your efforts in that direction, Mr. Chairman.

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