Ad Hoc Working Group on the 
Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly

INDIA STATEMENT 
by 
Mr. Asokan Amarnath, Counsellor

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Distinguished Co-Chairs,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as co-chairs of this Ad-Hoc Working Group for the 74th Session. I am hopeful that under your leadership we will be able to achieve greater progress on this critical issue. Let me assure you my delegation’s full support and co-operation for a productive outcome.

Allow me also to thank you for convening this meeting on the revitalization of the General Assembly, which is an integral part of the much-needed and long-awaited reform of the United Nations. India associates itself with the statement delivered by Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

75 years ago when the United Nations was born, the UN Charter had conceived the General Assembly as a global agenda-setter, an active promoter of friendly relations, a keen problem-solver and an effective agent of all-round development. The world that we know today has rapidly changed and is starkly different from what it was in 1945. However, the same cannot be said about the UN, and in particular the General Assembly.

Since the 62nd session of General Assembly, we have been collectively struggling with the concept of ‘revitalization’. While it is important to acknowledge the incremental changes that we have achieved, we must also confess that we are still talking in aspirational terms about this issue. Faith in the United Nations cannot be restored until it is reformed to reflect the contemporary realities.

In this regard, the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative and policy-making body reflecting our collective will, should occupy a pre-eminent place. We must recall that the UN Charter gave the General Assembly this unique leadership role. Article 10 of the UN Charter mandates the General Assembly to discuss ‘any question or matter within the scope of the Charter’ or ‘relating to the powers and functions of any organs’ provided for in the Charter, except as provided in Article 12.
Distinguished Co-Chairs,

We welcome the focus areas identified by you to ensure a targeted and productive discussions during the this year. Indeed, there is a need to curb the duplication of work and proliferation of events to make our organization more efficient, effective and accountable. While we are focusing on these issues, we must also address the issue of how to preserve General Assembly’s role and authority and what should be its appropriate relationship to the other principal organs of the UN, in particular the Security Council.

We welcome the expansion of membership of the ACABQ to make the body more democratic and representative. India encourages a similar exercise to be eventually undertaken in respect of the membership of other bodies as well.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

2020 is pivotal year in the history of UN, in the context of gender. The global community will mark the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It also marks the 10th anniversary of UN-WOMEN, an agency dedicated for the accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. While we are speaking about ‘Generation Equality’, it would not be a bad idea to promote ‘Leadership Equality’ at the UN.

In this regard, General Assembly can take the lead by ensuring a greater representation of women in its leadership position. It is extremely unfortunate and unacceptable that there have been only four women, who have presided the General Assembly. This imbalance has no place in the 21st century and immediate action must be taken to rectify it. There is no better year to commence action on this issue than 2020. India is proud that the first women President of General Assembly was an Indian national. It is also a matter of pride for India that all four female Presidents of General Assembly, so far, have been from the NAM group of countries.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

I conclude by reiterating the following two proposals:

• Restoration of the sanctity of the annual General Debate by reducing the multiple high-level events running parallel to the annual General Debate to ensure the salience of this most important event on the UNGA calendar

• Importance of preserving the intergovernmental, inclusive and democratic nature of the UN
My delegation will continue to actively participate in and lend its full support to revitalize and reinvigorate the General Assembly's role as chief policy-making body of the UN.

Thank you.