Remarks by Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Acting 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 June 02, 2010.

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you very much for giving me the floor. Let me at the outset express my deep gratitude to you and your team in producing the negotiation text.

You are aware that India has been a firm supporter of actual negotiations for reform of the Security Council. To this end we actively supported the demand requesting you to produce a text on which the negotiations could start. The involvement of 140 Member-States in raising this demand clearly shows the overwhelming nature of the support in the international community for real reform of the Security Council. We applaud the effort undertaken by you and your team in producing the negotiation text.

Mr. Chairman,

Your negotiation text is a good basis for starting serious inter-governmental negotiations. It is imperative that all of us engage in these negotiations going beyond the general statements of our positions and intent. Equally important is the need for the process of Council reform to remain the exclusive preserve of the UN member-states at these inter-governmental negotiations. Efforts that in any way detract from these negotiations need to be eschewed.

As regards the text, it is, of course, obvious that in the first instance we need to make it shorter and focus it on the middle-ground, i.e. where the views of the overwhelming majority lie on the key aspects of reform.

Mr. Chairman, the voices in this room today and as we proceed to discuss the five specific elements in detail over the coming weeks, we believe, would give you a clear idea of where this middle ground is. In the view of my delegation, the following are significant.
First, the overwhelming majority of UN member-states have expressed their clear preference for expansion of the Council in both its permanent and non-permanent categories. There cannot be any reform without expansion in both the categories of membership. Equally, expansion only in the non-permanent category or any of its other variants does not constitute reform and is merely the perpetuation of the current inefficiency by the same ineffective means in vogue since 1963.

Second, on the size of the Council, there is convergence on the need for expansion from the current fifteen to a figure in the mid-twenties. Also, most of the positions have called for a mandatory review after a period ranging from eight to fifteen years.

Third, the G4 position on the 'question of the veto’ is unambiguous and constructive. We stress the need for an outcome that ensures the democratization of decision-making within the Council. India is willing to engage with all concerned with an open mind on this key issue.

Fourth, India associates itself with the growing clamour for early reform of working methods of the Council, which is an integral part of the broader imperative of comprehensive reform and expansion of the membership of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories.

Fifth, on the issue of regional representation, we lay great store by the principle of equitable geographical distribution. India supports a Charter-based distribution of seats that addresses the lack of representation of African, Latin American and Caribbean countries and the lack of adequate representation of Asian countries in the permanent membership; as well as the lack of adequate representation of developing countries, including least developed, landlocked countries and small island states in the non-permanent membership.

Sixth, India calls for the General Assembly and the Security Council as two principal organs of the United Nations to respect each other’s distinct roles, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, and strive to secure the effective functioning of the United Nations as a whole.

Mr. Chairman,

Before I conclude, let me restate the obvious. Unless and until we are either resigned by fate or circumscribed by design to an unrepresentative, ineffective and underperforming Security Council, we must hasten to achieve results. We owe it primarily to ourselves and to our succeeding generations to bring about genuine reform at the earliest. To this end, India, along with its partners in the G4, L69 and other like-minded countries and groupings is committed to play its due role in a spirit of accommodation and flexibility. We call on the others to do so likewise and thus rise up to the challenge.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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