



INTERVENTION BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK

CHAIR OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS
ON THE QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION AND INCREASE IN
THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND OTHER MATTERS
RELATED TO THE COUNCIL

AT AN INFORMAL PLENARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. And so we start the middle chapter of our reform story. It's good to see you all back here for the second round of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. As any author knows, the middle of a novel is the most challenging part to write. A transitional phase, where the excitement of the beginning threatens to seep away and a satisfying resolution to the story lines is not yet clearly in sight. Therefore, the middle is the place to raise the stakes. With the introduction of the main characters and themes out of the way, more character interaction and narrative action are needed to develop and deepen the plot.
2. Running out of creativity and courage, many novelists get bogged down in the middle. But not you, I am sure. I have faith in you, because you have been working together in good faith, with mutual respect and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. I count on you to again put pen to paper and to constructively co-author the next chapter.
3. The primary source material for the remainder of your novel is not new: namely, the substantive underpinning of the negotiations as defined in paragraph e of Decision 62/557. As each and every one of us can read, this includes the positions and proposals of Member States, regional groups and other Member States Groupings. Old or new, oral or written – all of these positions and proposals are still very much on the table as part of that primary source material.
4. What I, as Chair of this process, have tabled at the beginning of this week is simply meant to serve as a source of inspiration. Nothing more, nothing less. It does not in any way supplant the substantive underpinning. Written in strict conformity with the President's Work Plan, my overview has the solemn purpose not to circumscribe, but to catalyze. And if there is enough political will in this house to make decisive progress, the overview will indeed do just that, will indeed catalyze the process.
5. Since I was appointed, to catalyze has been my objective all along, and I sincerely thank the membership for welcoming and supporting my approach – both objective and steady – all this time. That same approach I brought to the difficult task of composing the first round's overview – the result might not be perfect, but it is partial in only one way: partial to progress.
6. While the overview is comprehensive in the sense of dealing with all the five key issues and taking all the proceedings into account, it does not and cannot contain all the positions and proposals in all their detail. By its very nature, as the dictionary attests, an overview is a general outline. Although

the attached letters, an integral part of the document, do add a great amount of detail, it is especially as a general outline that the overview can concentrate the mind and focus the debate – as opposed to a verbatim account or a laundry list. A debate still firmly based on all your positions and proposals in all their detail.

7. A debate that today, as announced in paragraph 19 of the overview, revolves around the review, not the overview. Review or challenge, to be precise. Right after no less than fifteen meetings on the five key issues, this is the right time to really explore a concept that affects them all, namely a review or challenge mechanism – more specifically, its general nature, agenda, timing and frequency. Undeniably, the prospect of a future reassessment impacts what we decide in the present. Given that this impact could extend to each and every aspect of our reform decisions, the concept of review or challenge offers an opportunity to have a more comprehensive discussion – an important wish reiterated all throughout the first round and all throughout the membership. I am granting that wish.
8. Not only is addressing review or challenge a good way to usher out the first round, but also to usher in the second, to start the middle chapter. As I said, this is the chapter where novelists can only advance the story by raising the stakes. In the context of our process, raising the stakes means pushing the envelope on compromise. During the first round, we have seen the first gestures from different sides. Now it is time to follow-through towards a breakthrough. The accent has to move from fleshing out the positions to showing flexibility. Starting out exploring the concept of review or challenge, which cuts across a wide variety of positions and proposals, will help us do just that.
9. Comprehensiveness and compromise will be keywords of this second round. After viewing the five key issues all at once from the perspective of review or challenge, the remainder of the second round will also exhibit the much demanded comprehensive character. Over the course of two exchanges, we will examine the five key issues according to the logic with which the Charter puts them together. During each of these meetings, Member States are of course free to express their views on any matter they deem relevant. It is however part of my responsibility as Chair to, in the interest of compromise, add some structure to the discussions – and what better inspiration for this than the Charter? By the end of June, after two rounds of negotiations, the five key issues will have been considered both separately and jointly. And all throughout this process, the five key issues as defined in decision 62/557 are still there – untouched, all in one piece, all important in their own right.
10. What I hope also carries over from the first into the second round is your active and interactive participation. As you will have read in my overview,

more than three quarters of the membership engaged in the negotiation process, and that is just one of the many interesting statistics at my disposal. I could have included, for example, factual data on which countries adhered to the three minute rule and which did not. Instead, I will merely renew my plea to be short and sweet – in the interest of interactive and active participation. There should be time for everyone who wants to speak and, in the second cycle of interventions, for everyone who wants to respond.

11. It is now time for me to cede the floor myself and listen to you attentively. I have and will continue to undertake my particular responsibility as Chair, discharging my mandate as always with Decision 62/557 as lodestar and guided by the UN Charter, the World Summit Outcome document, the relevant UN rules and procedures, legal advice and past practice. Now I am counting on you to undertake your own responsibility for the future of the process. Based on how far you have already come this session, I hold great expectations about how this story will unfold. It is yours to write. History is yours to write. In time, historians will surely judge this writing effort – judge whether you grasped and grabbed the great opportunity before us. But let this be a consolation: according to the American freethinker H.L. Menken, historians are only failed novelists themselves.

Thank you.

Opening remarks by H.E. Zahir Tanin,
Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York,
Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations
on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of
the Security Council and other matters related to the Council.
Informal plenary of the General Assembly, UNHQ New York, 26 May 2009.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. It is a great pleasure to see you all back here for the continuation of Exchange 1 of the second round of our intergovernmental negotiations. Before giving the first speaker the floor, allow me to extend two invitations.
2. To begin with, I would like to invite the membership to take another good look at my opening remarks of May 22. During the debate, I listened carefully to all the interventions of Member States, including comments and concerns. Since I sincerely believe my word of welcome that day addressed a fair number of them, I ask Member States to carefully consider it. Copies are of course available in the room.
3. My second invitation concerns our topic for discussion, review or challenge. As a number of delegations already emphasized on Friday, this topic, relevant to all the five key issues as defined in Decision 62/557 and common to a substantial mass of positions and proposals, requires thorough analysis. That is why I would like to invite Member States to work towards reform by further working on that analysis today. After one and a half decade of debate, this is the time not for paralysis but for progress.

Thank you.

Closing remarks by H.E. Zahir Tanin,
Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations in New York,
Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations
on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of
the Security Council and other matters related to the Council.
Informal plenary of the General Assembly, UNHQ New York, 26 May 2009.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. And so we round out the first of the three exchanges making up the second round of our intergovernmental negotiations. I have listened carefully to all of you. At the outset, one delegation, speaking on behalf of a group of Member States, made a quite appropriate reference to Alice in Wonderland. Indeed, we should be careful not to move forward only to remain in one place, as Alice did. Fortunately, the Red Queen, one of the fantasy characters she meets, had some good advice for Alice, and for all of us, and I quote: "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!" End of quote.
2. Inspiring Member States to rise above themselves in that way and rise to the occasion – that constitutes my solemn duty as Chair of this process. In fulfilling that duty, my lodestar was, is and will continue to be decision 62/557. Its

paragraph e spells out the substantive underpinning of our intergovernmental negotiations, and I quote:

“i. The positions and proposals of Member States, regional groups and other Member States groupings;

iii. The following documents: report of the Open-ended Working Group on its work during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly; General Assembly decision 61/561 and the report of the Open-ended Working Group on its work during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly;”

3. End of quote. There can be no debate or doubt about what these negotiations are based on. Decision 62/557 enshrines the positions and proposals, like they were explained in speech or in writing by Member States themselves, as the substantive basis of this process, along with the specified UN documents. In my May 22 opening remarks, I have called this the primary source material.

4. My overview as mandated through the President’s Work Plan, on the other hand, is simply meant to serve as a source

of inspiration. Nothing more, nothing less. Inspiration to run twice as fast as you can, in order to get somewhere. We are not dealing with a report or resolution to be adopted or to be changed or amended as was suggested, but with a sovereign contribution from the Chair.

5. There was some concern, that the paragraphs with the principal options do not contain all the positions in all their detail. That, however, was the point. By reflecting the main thrust of the first round and some but not all of the relevant negotiables, this part of the overview can concentrate the mind and focus the debate during the second round. Member States can benefit from this as they see fit. My overview is to catalyze, not circumscribe. The positions and proposals, as expressed by Member States themselves in speech or in writing, are still leading. I do want to point out, though, that my letters laid out said positions and proposals in a more detailed fashion and that these letters form an integral part of the overview.

6. While 62/557 will thus continue to be my lodestar, as always I will also be guided by the UN Charter, the World Summit Outcome document, the relevant UN rules and procedures,

legal advice and past practice. The supreme authority and logic of the Charter has inspired the exact implementation of Decision 62/557 during the second round, which should not repeat the first. Over the course of the two remaining exchanges, we will examine the five key issues as the Charter puts them together. This schedule responds to a membership-wide demand for more comprehensive discussions. In response to some concerns about this schedule I repeat: I am not out to circumscribe, but to catalyze. During each of the two meetings, Member States are free to express their views on any matter they deem relevant. For example, I can imagine that the first exchange on composition will feature some mention of the veto as well. I can also imagine that during both exchanges, the membership will address the topic of review or challenge. After all, as we have seen over the course of this first exchange, review or challenge is highly relevant to all of the five key issues as defined in Decision 62/557 and common to a substantial mass of positions and proposals. By the end of June, after two rounds of negotiations, the five key issues will have been considered both separately and jointly. And all throughout this process, the five key issues as defined in

decision 62/557 are still there – untouched, all in one piece, all important in their own right.

7. Comprehensiveness and compromise should be the keywords of this second round. In charting the path ahead, I have undertaken my responsibility to take the process forward, impartial to any of the positions but partial to progress. As I have elaborated while addressing comments and concerns both on Friday and today, I believe this is a road we can all travel down together, however bumpy in places. You know that has always been important to me. Along the road, I will continue to take your comments and concerns into account to the best of my abilities. For example, a number of delegations have asked me to indicate how many speakers supported which reform option – I am certainly willing to look into that in the future. In any case, I hope to see you all back for Exchange 2 on June 11.

Thank you.