



UNITED NATIONS
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**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
60TH SESSION**

PLENARY

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR VANU GOPALA MENON,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SINGAPORE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM 117 AND 120:
QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON
AND INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL
AND RELATED MATTERS; FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF
THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT**

20 JULY 2006

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Mr President,

1 Despite perceptions to the contrary, we have witnessed a number of significant UN reforms this year. The Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council, and the Central Emergency Relief Fund were established. A whistleblower protection system and an Ethics Office have been initiated. Resolutions on Development, and Management and Secretariat Reform have been adopted. There has, however, been one exception. We have seen little real movement in Security Council reform - both on the questions of enlargement and working methods.

2 I will deal with them sequentially. Singapore supports enlargement of the Security Council to better reflect current geopolitical realities. Today's world is different from 1945, yet the Security Council remains essentially unchanged. If consensus is reached on enlarging the UNSC, we would support expansion in both permanent and non-permanent seats as part of a comprehensive Security Council reform, including working methods. In this regard, my delegation would like to reiterate our support for the previous G4 draft resolution on the Council's expansion, except on the question of the veto. We note that three of the G4 countries and the African Union have re-submitted their proposals on the issue and we hope to see some progress in the near future.

3 While on the subject of UNSC enlargement, allow me to reiterate my delegation's views on the use of the veto and the idea of establishing semi-permanent seats. The right of the veto was born of a different era. It was a privilege and a safety valve conferred on the five victorious powers from the Second World War to secure their participation in the UN. The situation today is different. Singapore opposes granting the veto to any new permanent members. Extending the veto will complicate decision-making in the Council and undermine the UN's credibility. Paralysis comes to mind and I suspect that this will encourage the major powers to bypass the Security Council to the detriment of us all. That said, we recognize that the P5 will not give up their right to veto. This is a reality that we have to accept. But we should not add to the problem by further complicating UNSC decision-making.

4 We also have strong reservations with any notion of semi-permanent seats. This would allow medium powers to seek election to both the renewable seats (whatever their length of term) and the existing two-year non-renewable seats. In practice, this would result in the exclusion of small states from the Security Council. This is unfair. And even if we were to make it possible for all member states to compete for both categories of non-permanent seats, the net result would be similar. I repeat that this is unfair to half of the approximately 100 small states

that have never served in the Security Council. We cannot support proposals that exclude or make it difficult for small countries to serve in key organs of the UN, including the Security Council. Such exclusiveness would do nothing to improve the legitimacy or representativeness of the Security Council.

5 Enlargement is not the only issue. An equally important issue is the reform of Security Council working methods. If our aim is to make the Security Council more effective, we need comprehensive reform that includes working methods. And might I add that enlargement and working methods should be pursued in parallel tracks and not be held hostage by each other. Working methods reform is about ensuring that the Security Council is transparent and inclusive in its decision-making. This is about ensuring that the Council's decisions have buy-in from stakeholders, thus making its decisions more legitimate and effective. Regrettably, the Security Council remains opaque, leading many to question its decisions. We are heartened to note that the Council has tried to address the issue of its working methods through the Working Group on Documentation chaired by Japan. We would like to see this initiative continue. But while the current effort is commendable, it does not do enough to cover aspects dealing with interactions between the Security Council and non-Council members.

6 It is in this context that Singapore, Liechtenstein, Jordan, Switzerland and Costa Rica, the so-called S5, have put forward a resolution on improving the working methods of the Security Council. While we are all familiar with the details, let me elaborate on the rationale. The S5 proposals do not seek to undermine the powers and prerogatives of the UNSC. The S5 resolution does not advocate abandoning the current system. Rather, the draft resolution has taken on board suggestions that we have been discussing for years in various fora, including the Open-Ended Working Group on UNSC Reform. It has packaged many of them as improvements to the Council's working methods to increase the Council's effectiveness and legitimacy. The S5 proposals are also in line with Article 10 of the UN Charter which states that the General Assembly has the authority to discuss any question or matter within the scope of the Charter or relating to the functions of any organ of the UN and to make recommendations to UN members and to the Security Council. We believe that if the Security Council can be made more transparent and communicative, this would increase the buy-in and support for Council decisions from all member states. I hope that delegations will respond positively to the S5's suggestions for improving the working methods of the Security Council. We believe that our suggestions will increase the transparency and accountability of the UNSC and contribute to a strengthened and more effective United Nations.

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