



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

1 SEPTEMBER 2009

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. Welcome back. Today, we once again exchange our place under the burning sun for a seat in this negotiation room – the room where we deal with the burning issue of Security Council reform. Summer has come and gone, and I hope this period of reflection has strengthened your resolve to reform the Council. In the words of the American poet Wallace Stevens: “The summer night is like a perfection of thought.” I can’t wait to hear how you have perfected your thoughts over the many past summer nights. After all, through my July 16 letter, I asked you to take advantage of the hiatus by reaching conclusions about your own positions.
2. In addition to that, I also asked you to informally reach out to others – not just to the likeminded, but also across the aisle. We certainly have come a long way since February 19, but in the times ahead we need to go the extra mile by increasingly being compromise-driven and taking into consideration the logic of the other’s position and the level of support it enjoys.
3. We can’t stall now, after starting off so well. After clearing all the procedural hurdles on day one. After seeing a genuine surge of interest, with up to two-thirds of the membership actively and interactively engaged. After, inspired by the Overview, chewing over the main options and negotiables for reform.
4. Out of these, as always based on your guidance, we are for now going to zero in on two potential reform models, looking not just at all their different varieties but also at all their different pros and cons. During the meetings, Member States are of course free to express their views on any matter they deem relevant. I for one am just discharging my fundamental responsibility as Chair by slightly focusing the agenda as per your requests. It is my firm intention to help you move ahead, not go around in circles. What is more, I do so without any prejudice whatsoever to the particular solution you might arrive at in the end. I do not point my finger in any definite direction – I am simply the one who holds the gavel.
5. So, in accordance with your different requests, tomorrow will be all about the model featuring an expansion in both current categories, with the intermediate model at the center of attention come September 3. Needless to say, both models extend into all five dimensions of reform – known among Security Council reform aficionados as the five key issues.
6. Nevertheless, today we kick off this third round by explicitly putting the five of them at the forefront of our discussion. Considered one by one in the first round and more comprehensively during the second, the five key issues now feature on the agenda all at once. After this exchange, yet another opportunity to explore the interconnectedness of these issues, we will have looked at them from every possible different angle.
7. This way, we do justice to GA Decision 62/557, which will continue to be our brightly shining lodestar on the journey towards reform. Or, to be more precise, early reform, the overarching objective world leaders rallied around

back in 2005. When is early, one might ask. It is never too early in a world where the number of major conflicts last year went up instead of going down. It is never too early in a world where city streets are the new trenches and civilians the main casualties of war. It is never too early in a world where the next global emergency calling for a global response could be in foreign rather than financial affairs. The Wallace Stevens poem I quoted from at the outset bears the following title: "The house was quiet and the world was calm." Yet the world is not calm, so this house cannot remain quiet. In these dangerous days, this house, this world organization, is called upon to pull together and pull off a long overdue reform of its peace and security organ. The challenge is to make it reflect the global realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Security Council can become more effective, its resolutions more readily implemented, if it is widely perceived as a more representative and thus more legitimate body. Here, becoming more effective is really just jargon for saving more lives. That is why, in the words of the President of the General Assembly, a better Council cannot wait until tomorrow, if we want to have a better tomorrow.

8. As the third round gets underway, our collective efforts to boost the Council's legitimacy and its effectiveness enter into a new phase – a decisive one. I urge you to make the most out of the little time we have left this session by being compromise driven, concrete and concise. Nobody, I presume, has forgotten about the three minute rule over the summer, although I won't get tired of reminding delegations time and again if necessary. You have a lot of work on your hands and I am here to facilitate that work – as you have grown accustomed to, impartial to any of the positions, yet partial to 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, 3 September 2009.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear friends,

1. Next week, it will be eight years since the day the world changed. The attacks of September 11 and their aftermath also shook this building to its very foundations. As many, friends and foes of the UN alike, have stated ever since, in this brave new world we need a brave new UN. The term United Nations already bears in it the Latin verb “nasci” – to be born. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, it has to become associated with another: “renasci” – to be reborn. This renaissance would not be complete without a new and improved Security Council, the world body’s heart muscle. Not when the number of major conflicts last year went up instead of going down. Not when city streets are the new trenches and civilians the main casualties of war. Not when the next global emergency calling for a global response could be in foreign rather than financial affairs.
2. That is why at the World Summit in 2005, our leaders entrusted us with the mission to reform the Council. But they rallied around “early reform”, not “reform whenever”. As the President of the General Assembly has concluded, it would seem safe to say, that world leaders did not mean to see another World Summit pass us by with the status quo intact. Fortunately, with the President’s leadership, this year we at long last left the antechamber of reform and walked into the negotiation room – a door opened by landmark decision 62/557.
3. There are those who say that we have failed, because after half a year of negotiations we did not reform the Council. But it is they who have failed. They have failed to see the decisive progress you achieved on the most sensitive of issues and under the most difficult of circumstances. In the twilight of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session, the process almost collapsed under the weight of acrimony. Since then, acrimony has given way to harmony. This spring, with a careful yet courageous work plan embraced by everyone, we cleared all the procedural hurdles on day one, avoiding negotiations on the negotiations and moving straight into the substance. From that first day on, there has been a genuine surge of interest, with up to two-thirds of the membership actively and interactively engaged. After previous reports had already recorded a wide range of views, you chewed over the main options and negotiables for reform, inspired by my Overview. During the third round, you zeroed in on two of the potential models. After three rounds, the five key issues from 557 have been examined from nearly all possible different angles. And also, over three

rounds, with the articulation of the positions, the board has been set – now hopefully the pieces can really start moving more towards a compromise.

4. So at this point in time we have ground to be proud. Much ground has been covered. The groundwork has been laid. The groundwork for a real give and take, for real reform. The groundwork for the realization of the President's vision: a United Nations where every country counts. To humbly contribute to that vision, to serve under an immensely dedicated man like Miguel d'Escoto has been a great honor. It is now my responsibility to brief him and, upon his decision, get back to you briefly on the steps ahead. I will tell him that you are united in your desire to continue the process in a smooth and solid manner – no progress should be lost, no time should be wasted. In the meantime, I understand from the Office of the President, you will receive the report of the Open-ended Working Group – it will be in the mail right after Labor Day weekend, with its final meeting scheduled for Wednesday afternoon. Over that same Labor Day weekend, I will labor diligently to finish my already announced letter about the now finished third round. But before I put pen to paper, let me use this oral statement to sincerely thank all of you, the owners of this process. It has been a great journey so far – my Egyptian friend compared it to an airplane ride. An accurate comparison in my view. An airplane is a fast means of transportation – however, to avoid storms or airspace restrictions, it does not always take the fastest route, what matters is getting to the destination all in one piece. I for one can see the destination somewhere in the distance and I believe in time we will safely land this plane there – at a place called reform. That way, we will have finally accomplished the mission entrusted to us by world leaders, which, after all, was never meant to be a permanent mission.

Thank you.