



INTERVENTION 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

AT AN INFORMAL PLENARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4 MARCH 2009

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. Today, without further delay, we proceed to negotiations on the substance of Security Council reform – in this case the key issue of categories of membership. Two days ago, Member States through the Secretariat already received a letter from the Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations. Through this letter, I provided guidance to the membership on the path to decisive progress, in strict conformity with the Work Plan elaborated by the President of the General Assembly and embraced by Member States during our successful 19 February launch of the Intergovernmental Negotiations. It is up to Member States themselves to walk down that path to decisive progress, they are the masters of their own destiny. As Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations I am merely lighting beacons that show the way towards the implementation of GA Decision 62/557, thereby discharging my own responsibilities to the best of my abilities.
2. While it is not my intention to repeat the content of my letter here, let me make the following three points before we get going on the substance.
3. One: this is an opportunity to, if necessary, further clarify your original position regarding categories of membership, but most of all, to show some flexibility on it, including through new proposals. I encourage all delegations to show flexibility at the first instance – don't wait for others, the first-mover advantage is up for grabs.
4. Two: benefiting from suggestions from all sides, I have set up the meeting so as to facilitate a productive exchange between Member States. That is why I will enable Member States, if they so wish, to intervene a second time and thereby react to and reciprocate the flexibility shown by their peers. This is particularly relevant if the speaking order has prevented them from doing so at their first opportunity to speak. To make such interaction possible, Member States are urged to be concise and limit their interventions to no longer than three minutes. The time for long statements is now long passed, please make it short and sweet. Again, this is no rigid straightjacket, but simply what I in my capacity of Chair promote as a straightway towards decisive progress. I want to see both that progress eventually accomplished and all delegations meanwhile accommodated. I call on all to leave some space for your colleagues to pronounce themselves on an issue vital to each and everyone of us.
5. Three: if we need more time than a day, I will of course accommodate that, with the continuation preferably planned for the day immediately thereafter. In any case, however, we are to uphold the schedule as laid out in the President's Work Plan, with the meetings on the next two key issues planned for respectively 16 and 25 March, while adhering to Decision 62/557 by simply following the order of key issues established therein by the membership.
6. I cannot prejudge what lies ahead, but, as I wrote in my letter, I am confident that the good faith and mutual respect in full display at our successful 19 February launch of the negotiations will take us very far very fast. Thank you.

Closing statement 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, 5 March 2009.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. In closing, I want to thank delegations for welcoming my letter and for making this a very productive exchange. Good faith and mutual respect once again reigned supreme, as I am sure they will at our next meeting, scheduled for March 16. During that meeting, we are to address the question of the veto, thereby simply following the order of key issues as established by Member States themselves through GA Decision 62/557, which the President of the General Assembly has described as our road map. I say this in response to suggestions to change that order. However, the interconnectedness and the different degrees of convergence regarding the five key issues shall be duly taken into account in the set-up of the second round.
2. After Member States finish the first round before the end of April, in the absence of an official record, I will provide them with an overview, in strict conformity with the Work Plan elaborated by the President of the General Assembly and embraced by Member States during our successful 19 February launch of the Intergovernmental Negotiations. It will be comprehensive in the sense of covering all the five key issues, which after all form the organizing principle of this first round. Other than that I clearly cannot prejudge its content, which lies in the hands and rests on the shoulders of Member States.
3. In my humble opinion, yesterday and today you have made headway in that sense – headway towards accomplishing that goal of early reform set in 2005 by our own leaders. I think that, yesterday and today we have laid a solid foundation for the fulfillment of the task entrusted to us this session.
4. One last remark: for the next meeting, we will make use of a list of speakers. So no more competition on who first raises the nameplate, just competition on who shows most flexibility. I firmly intend to keep doing my job as Chair of these Intergovernmental Negotiations by calling for that flexibility, which is key to any negotiation and to any solution.

Thank you very much.