



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

16 MARCH 2009

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. It is my pleasure and privilege to open this meeting on the question of the veto, key issue number two. The veto, the “I forbid”, is certainly a challenging issue, but of course not forbiddingly so. After how you dealt with categories of membership – head-on but heartily – there is no question you can handle the question of the veto. Last week, Member States once more received a letter of straightforward content, firmly rooted in GA Decision 62/557 and the President’s Work Plan. A letter to help them prepare for this part of the negotiations.
2. As Chair, I will also continue to work my heart out to make these intergovernmental negotiations as interactive as possible. That is why I will again give Member States the opportunity 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. At the same time, Member States are again urged to be concise and limit their interventions to no longer than three minutes.
3. It is in your interest to speak, but perhaps even more to listen to others – our last meeting saw a wide diversity of delegations taking the floor, thereby broadening the floor, broadening our exchange. Making the intergovernmental negotiations not just interactive but also inclusive, this new breadth has definitely managed to breathe new life into the process.
4. The same can be said of the first signs of flexibility shown by different sides. No one ever said it was easy; it takes courage to open up and reach out to others rather than retreating into rigidity. As the author Alice Swaim said: “Courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go; it is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow.” We need a time of spring blossom not just outside but also inside the negotiation room. Everyone knows this time is always short – that is why we need to move expeditiously.
5. Before I quickly pass the floor, let me just inform you that, for reasons of scheduling, we will address the next key issue, regional representation, on March 24 rather than March 25. For now, my three minutes are up, so let us move on to the list of speakers.

Closing Remarks

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

1. My expectations have been more than met – this has been an excellent exchange. I very much look forward to the next one. As I stated in my opening remarks, on March 24 the key issue of regional representation is to be addressed, with a letter circulated well in advance. Hereby I would also like to announce, that on 9 April we will focus on the size of an enlarged Council and working methods of the Security Council, followed on 21 April by a meeting on the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, the last of the five key issues. The five fingers on the hand of Security Council reform – a hand that should subsequently be able to reach for decisive progress.

Thank you.