

29 January 2009

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
on the Security Council reform to an informal plenary session of the General
Assembly**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Brothers and sisters,

I appear before you today to faithfully fulfill my duties as Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. In particular, I have taken the floor pursuant to paragraph c of GA decision 62/557, which reads, and I quote:

“Decided, building on the progress achieved thus far, in particular during its sixty-first and sixty-second sessions, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States to continue immediately to address, within the Open-ended Working Group, the framework and modalities in order to prepare and facilitate intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. The Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group would present the results of these consultations to an informal plenary session of the General assembly, no later than February 1, 2009.” End of quote.

While opening the sixth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, I made the following remark regarding the Working Group and decision 62/557, and I quote: “Some people deride this forum for its long-windedness. However, even though it was a long and winding road, this Working Group and no other led the United Nations to the now imminent intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform. Decision 62/557 stands as a landmark achievement of multilateral diplomacy, and the Open-Ended Working Group deserves much of the credit.” End of quote.

Only once in its entire existence has the Open-ended Working Group started its work earlier in the session than it did this year. This stands as a testament to my determination to implement decision 62/557. So far, no fewer than six meetings have been held, one on 11 November 2008, one on 17 November 2008, two on 5 December 2008, one on 19 January 2009 and one on 26 January 2009. The Working Group was guided by the work plan I circulated to Member States through my 24 November letter. Member States embraced said work plan, a plan strictly based on decision 62/557. Likewise, during the first meeting on 11 November 2008, Member States all rallied around my choice for Vice-Chairman of the Working Group, His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations. I want to thank Ambassador Tanin for his tireless efforts so far and

wish him all the best in his other task of chairing the intergovernmental negotiations in the informal plenary of the General Assembly on my behalf.

In keeping with both the letter and the spirit of decision 62/557, I have given Member States ample opportunity to contribute within the Open-ended Working Group to those upcoming intergovernmental negotiations in a positive way and help pave the way towards them.

My first and most fundamental conclusion looking back is therefore that the Open-ended Working Group has so far complied with decision 62/557. Over the course of no fewer than six meetings, Member States addressed the framework and modalities in order to prepare and facilitate the intergovernmental negotiations. In accordance with my work plan, the 5 December meetings focused specifically on the framework and the 19 January meeting on modalities.

Second, the statements by Member States, 125 in total, demonstrated an overwhelming and across-the-board appetite to start intergovernmental negotiations in informal plenary of the General Assembly.

Third, we have seen a number of concrete, constructive and useful elements in the suggestions by Member States as to how to go about these negotiations.

As Chairman, I wasted no opportunity to exhort Member States to come up with detailed ideas and suggestions – this way, we would fulfill our mandate of addressing the framework and modalities. While the Working Group also heard oral proposals, a number of delegations heeded my call by presenting detailed written proposals.

During the first meeting, Mexico and the Republic of Korea presented a document entitled “OEWG Meetings. Schedule proposal.”

During the third meeting, Spain and Argentina presented a working paper entitled “Security Council reform process. Procedures and principles.”

During the fifth meeting, Canada and Malta introduced a working paper entitled “SC Reform Negotiations: Elements for a Decision by the GA on framework and modalities.”

These proposals will be annexed in their entirety to the report which paragraph g of decision 62/557 requires the Open-ended Working Group to submit to the General Assembly before the end of the 63rd session.

In close cooperation with Ambassador Tanin, I will very soon undertake my responsibility to take this process forward. Our lodestar will of course be decision 62/557, and we will be guided by the UN Charter, the World Summit Outcome Document, the relevant UN rules and procedures, legal advice, past practice and your input through the Open-ended Working Group. Input such as the useful elements in suggestions from all different corners, whether conveyed through oral statements or written proposals.

Even though we have only just finished this stage of the process, we believe that the urgency of the matter at hand and the universal eagerness among Member States require swift action and steadfast leadership on our part. Ambassador Tanin and I will continue to provide both. It is a privilege and a pleasure for me to announce that on 19 February 2009, we will commence the intergovernmental negotiations. At that first meeting, we will present a work plan, providing clarity on the terms and modalities and also providing a short-term schedule of meetings on in particular the five key issues. These meetings will be an opportunity for Member States to further flesh out their positions and show flexibility on them.

At the 2005 World Summit, our leaders called for, and I quote, “an early reform of the Security Council – an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations – in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions,” end of quote. So we have our work cut out for us in the forthcoming negotiations, which we have resolved through decision 62/557 to conduct, and I quote, “in good faith, with mutual respect and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner” and “seeking a solution that can garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member States.” End of quote.

Regarding the future of the Open-ended Working Group, I will merely repeat what I said in closing its last meeting. Implementation is called for not just when it comes to paragraph c, but regarding all operational paragraphs of decision 62/557 calling for action by the Working Group. Let me conclude now by thanking all delegations for the role they have played in this phase of the Open-ended Working Group’s life.

Thank you.