



Statement by H.E. Camillo M. Gonsalves

Ambassador of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

**Explanation of Vote re: Deleting Reports on Nepal, Northern Uganda from
Third Committee Work Programme (documents A/62/346 and A/62/347)**

62nd Session of the General Assembly
8 October, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

It is indeed unfortunate that this morning's session came to a vote, but the vote was apparently necessary, and in our opinion, correctly decided in the circumstances.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines' fervent desire is that each and every issue touching upon human rights is fully ventilated before the various bodies of the United Nations, including the Third Committee. But that desire, however passionate and all-encompassing, cannot be allowed to derail the efficacious functioning of this Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

St. Vincent and the Grenadines finds itself in agreement with the sentiments of Germany and France, expressed this morning, to avoid the substance of the issue before us. Because the issue voted upon by this body, narrowly construed, was not a substantive matter. It was procedural, or in legal terms, it was jurisdictional in nature.

It went to the power of the OHCHR, though a generous and expansive interpretation of its own mandate, to effectively co-opt and define the agenda of this Committee through the unlimited imposition of unsolicited reports.

Nothing in the letter or spirit of Resolution 48/148 speaks to the OHCHR acting of its own initiative in such a manner. Indeed, Paragraph Four speaks explicitly of being subject to the direction of the Secretary General, and to the obligation of the OHCHR to carry out assigned tasks.

Given what we perceive to be an action beyond the four walls of the Resolution, and the looming vote, it seemed to St. Vincent and the Grenadines that a vote in favour of deletion was the only mechanism available to maintain the sort of procedural honesty and fundamental fairness that would avoid future instances of member states feeling “ambushed” by 11th hour, unsolicited additions by the OHCHR.

Further, and finally, Mr. Chairman, St. Vincent and the Grenadines was mindful of the power of precedent, which was compellingly argued by the EU Representative, and others. It seems to us that a “No” vote on this issue, after the full and robust debate that took place earlier, would have created an irrevocable precedent in favour of a backdoor expansion of the OHCHR’s mandate. Such an expansion and entrenchment through precedent would have been unfortunate, given the obvious lack of consensus in this body for a decision of that sort.

Thank You.