



ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

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Statement

By

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Informal Meeting on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters

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Mr. Chairman, the delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would like to take this opportunity to thank you for convening this meeting, which purportedly marks the commencement of intergovernmental negotiations.

The attendance this morning was certainly indicative of the interest and eagerness of the Membership to proceed, in good faith, with the long overdue work of reform and democratization of the Security Council. As a small state with severely limited opportunities to even darken the door of the currently-constituted Security Council, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines enthusiastically welcomes any substantive progress towards the commencement and conclusion of intergovernmental negotiations.

However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines must confess some confusion and disappointment with the format of today's meeting. Firstly, we are confused, because today's meeting – to our ears – is indistinguishable from the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) meetings of previous months and years. Member States are again reiterating broad principles in general statements that cannot, even by the most generous interpretation, be considered negotiation. Indeed, the only item that we have negotiated today is our respective positions on the ever-growing list of speakers. In that regard, I must express my sympathy, and, indeed, empathy, with the sentiments expressed by Iraq, Oman, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal on that matter. Decision 62/557 is historic and new and unique for its establishment of a framework for *negotiations*, not for its perpetuation of the 15-year-old OEWG. This new phase must therefore represent a tangible break with the ways of old, not their continuation.

Secondly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is also somewhat disappointed, because this meeting, at best, represents only the most technical compliance with Decision 62/557. You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that Paragraph (d) of Decision 62/557 mandated commencement of intergovernmental negotiations “not later than February 28, 2009.” However, to our minds, the Work Plan before us today apparently indicates that negotiations will actually commence on March 4, which is obviously a date beyond the February 28 deadline. This may seem like a minor quibble, but strict and faithful adherence to the spirit and *letter* of Decision 62/557 is critical to its ongoing legitimacy and our collective success. It is

therefore our sincere hope that the March 4 commencement date is revisited with a view to ensuring true compliance with the Decision. Failing an appropriate rescheduling, we hope that the commencement of negotiations – on whichever day – is properly focused on *substantive* matters, as mandated by the Decision. Further general or procedural debates will represent further erosion of our unanimous Decision.

In that regard, we would like to echo the suggestions of other States, who view a composite text as useful – indeed, indispensable – to meaningful, inclusive and substantive progress. We therefore respectfully urge the President of the General Assembly, through you, Mr. Chairman, to submit a comprehensive composite text to serve as the basis of our negotiations, at some point prior to the actual commencement of those negotiations.

Of course, any such composite text must reflect the views of all member states. In that regard, I would take this opportunity to briefly recall the views expressed by our delegation, as well of those of Barbados, India, Jamaica, Malta, the Philippines, Singapore, and many others, regarding the representation of and access by small states in a reformed Council. I would like to remind Members that, among the elements delineated in document A/61/L.69/Rev.1, tabled on 14 September 2007, is “Greater representation of the developing countries, including island and small States.”

Mr. Chairman, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would also like to register our appreciation for your Work Plan, and our hope that negotiation sessions will be frequent, interactive, and conducted with good faith and flexibility. However, there may be some merit in Singapore’s suggestion that the Work Plan may be more efficacious if it were reordered with a view to picking the low-hanging negotiating fruit, so as to build goodwill and momentum throughout the negotiating process.

Mr. Chairman, we remain committed to the process, and, one again, reiterate our faith in you and the leadership of the President of the General Assembly to achieve substantive progress in the coming months.

I thank you.