



Brief Remarks by H.E. Camillo M. Gonsalves
Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

**On Security Council Reform
to an Informal Plenary Session of the General Assembly**

63rd Session of the General Assembly
29 January, 2009

Mr. President,

At the outset, the Delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would like to thank and congratulate you and His Excellency Mr. Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations, for convening this meeting and continuing to move the process forward. We would also like to express our appreciation to you for setting February 19, 2009 as the date for the commencement of substantive intergovernmental negotiations. Your announcement of the date for the start of negotiations gives flesh to the will of this body, as expressed in the unanimous Decision 62/557, which is the sole agreed procedural guidance for the intergovernmental negotiations process.

The February 19th date represents your recognition that the commencement of negotiations were not contingent upon consensus reinvention of the procedural wheel. Negotiations have been conducted, and continue to be conducted, under existing frameworks and modalities of the United Nations General Assembly. We have a preexisting basis and guidance for these negotiations, which, as you have indicated, including our unanimous decisions, the Charter of the United Nations, our rules of procedure, and past practice. We are, of course, free to make additional suggestions and propose augmentations to this framework. In that regard, I am confident in your ability to synthesise whichever of our useful individual contributions that do not contravene the letter and spirit of Decision 62/557.

Mr. President,

We share some of the concerns raised by the brotherly state of Malta regarding the role and potential marginalization of small States. As such, while we welcome continued consultations with individual states and groups, we feel compelled to urge that the Open Ended Working

Group not be supplanted by a *Closed Door* Working Group that tries to decide in two weeks what could not be agreed upon over the past five months. The transparency, inclusiveness, and equality of the process to date must be maintained in these crucial weeks.

I thank you and Ambassador Tanin once again for your vision and decisiveness, and look forward to your continued leadership as we transition from discussion to substantive negotiations in the informal General Assembly Plenary.

Thank you.