



# **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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Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

### **Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Related Matters**

20<sup>th</sup> January 2010

United Nations  
New York

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Mr. Chairman,

Nineteenth century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once famously opined “*there are no facts, only interpretations.*” Yesterday, we witnessed a practical demonstration of that maxim, as delegations tripped over themselves to parse and reinterpret the fact of a December 23, 2009 Letter, whose meaning is plain on its face, and the fact that 139 States have affixed their signatures to this letter.

Indeed, it is curious that many of the States that did not sign the Letter now seek to nominate themselves as its chief interpreters; to look behind the signatures of sovereign member states; and to speak on the behalf of other countries, in contravention of the unmistakably plain language of the Letter itself. It is more curious, still, that many of those states that have long rejected being labeled as members of a numerical minority because of a supposed lack of empirical evidence, now seek to parse such empirical evidence in a manner as to render it opaque and irrelevant.

These creative interpretations do a disservice to the negotiating process, and cannot succeed.

Mr. Chairman,

Any discussion on points of convergence must necessarily begin with the point of procedural convergence that the December 23<sup>rd</sup> Letter represents. At least 139 member states – in excess of two-thirds of the UN membership – have expressed unambiguous agreement on a particular procedural path. It is our hope that this obvious procedural convergence – which affords you, Mr. Chairman, the opportunity and mandate to exercise your partiality to progress – will also lead to substantive convergence in a text-based negotiating process. As stated clearly yesterday by the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Philippines, we should “*negotiate on what is reduced to writing.*”

Mr. Chairman,

Very often, in the course of UN negotiations, there are unacceptable assaults on our bedrock principles of transparency and inclusivity. However, it is also an unfortunate fact that these principles are often cynically invoked by the forces of obstruction and obfuscation.

Many of yesterday’s comments regarding transparency are, to my mind, a regrettable red herring. It is indeed unfortunate that some States were not formally invited to sign the December 23 Letter. All States should have been afforded such an opportunity. But their exclusion does not in any way invalidate the weight and authority of the 139 members who have decided to sign. Indeed, I would not presume to attack the validity of the UFC’s own letters and proposals on the basis that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has *never* been invited to affix our name to any their copious correspondence. These are, after all, merely letters to the Chairman, not decisions or substantive negotiations. The December 23 Letter therefore cannot be assailed on the basis of negotiating transparency.

This is not a case of a tiny subset of powerful States gathered in a dark room to make final decisions on the substance of Security Council reform. Instead, it is a request by 72% of the UN Membership to move the process forward in a text-based manner. No amount of interpretive contortions can detract from this inescapable fact.

Our delegation prefers to stick to these and other inescapable facts, rather than being drawn into games of interpretation and revisionism. Indeed, unlike others, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not make so bold as to speak definitively on the motivations and understandings of fellow member states. However, if we shared the generosity of interpretive spirit that has marked some other States' interventions, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would have – based on yesterday's statements – welcomed our dear brothers from Pakistan, Italy, Egypt and Turkey as the 140<sup>th</sup>, 141<sup>st</sup>, 142<sup>nd</sup>, and 143<sup>rd</sup> supporters of the Letter. Certainly, our delegation has not heard a single voice expressing serious disagreement with the path proposed by the December 23 Letter.

Substantively, our delegation has listened with great interest to Members' discussion of possible points of convergence. Much of that discussion has been encouraging. However, we believe that such discussion could be further aided and enhanced by the sort of document contemplated in the December 23 Letter. Our brother and neighbour from St. Lucia was correct when he stated yesterday that we have yet to begin substantive negotiations in earnest, which makes convergence hard to identify in precise terms. We will say parenthetically, however, that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines most emphatically does not support the nebulous "intermediate approach" advocated by some States, and we are unable to discern any convergence of opinion around the intermediate position.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that the overwhelming mandate you have received to provide the textual basis for our continuing negotiations falls squarely within the parameters of Resolution 62/557. That Resolution also provides the answer to the question posed yesterday by Italy concerning the purpose and goal of our intergovernmental negotiations. Our goal is, in the words of the Resolution a "*solution that can garner the widest possible acceptance.*" The process of compromise might be a means to that particular end, but it is not a goal in and of itself. Similarly, unanimity is a laudable aim, but it is certainly not a requirement of the Security Council Reform process.

Mr. Chairman,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines ends by reiterating our full support of your role, and our full recognition of your authority in leading this process toward the solution contemplated by resolution 62/557. We look forward to your prompt preparation of a text with options to serve as the basis for negotiations, and the early commencement of a text-based fifth round of negotiations.

I thank you.