



Statement by Ambassador Wang Guangya on Cluster IV (Strengthening the United Nations) of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report at GA 59th Session

(27 April 2005)

Mr. Facilitators:

In the sixty years since its founding, the United Nations has been discharging the important responsibilities of maintaining world peace and promoting common development and has played an irreplaceable role in international affairs. Undeniably in the face of the complex and volatile international situation, the United Nations machinery has been shown to have its share of shortcomings and therefore its reform is necessary. To this end the Secretary-General has put forward a good number of important proposals and ideas in his report. We appreciate all his efforts in this regard. I wish to reiterate the following **principles on UN reform**, which we hold dear:

First, The purposes and principles set out in the United Nations Charter remain valid and relevant to this day. Adherence to and faithfulness to these purposes and principles must be the premise and orientation for any UN reform and for the preparations for the September Summit.

Second, The purpose of reform is to build new consensus and strengthen existing unity so as to enhance the ability of the United Nations to meet new challenges with greater efficiency. All must see reform as a vehicle to promote a stronger collective security system and to achieve the MDGs, thus enabling the United Nations to play an even greater role in international affairs.

Third, Reform must be comprehensive and must cover all fields. Equal attention should be given to reform in every field and the legitimate concerns of all countries need to be accommodated. A special effort should be made to address the concerns of the developing countries in the field of development.

Fourth, Reform is a gradual process; it cannot be achieved overnight nor can it be a permanent fix. Active promotion of it must not be done at the expense of the necessary maturation process. The September Summit is an important opportunity and a new point of departure for UN reform but by no means the end of it. One cannot and should not expect the Summit to solve all issues of reform. Chinese folk wisdom warns that undue haste often slows progress. Efforts for early completion can be contemplated on issues that already enjoy preliminary agreement; those that still cause division can be considered in further discussions. All major decisions should be made on the basis of the widest possible consensus. Setting an artificial timeframe or

forcing a decision by a vote will not be in the interest of unity among the member states and runs counter to the purpose of the reform exercise.

Mr. Facilitators,

The **General Assembly** is the most representative, democratic and transparent organ of the United Nations; it plays an important role and exerts a major influence on the deliberations and policy-making of the United Nations. China supports the strengthening of the General Assembly's authority and role and favors the adoption of a package of reforms to revitalize the General Assembly; China is open to concrete proposals from all sides. China is ready to continue in-depth discussions on the question of establishing mechanisms enabling the Assembly to engage with civil society.

The functioning and performance of **ECOSOC** clearly fall far short of the expectations of the member states. We believe that there is considerable room for taking greater advantage of and refining many of its designated functions. China supports the strengthening of ECOSOC's role of leadership and coordination in the field of development, which should not be limited to monitoring the implementation of the MDGs but should cover all major areas of development. Proposals for ECOSOC to hold annual assessments at the ministerial level and biennial high-level development cooperation forum meetings and to be more involved in post-conflict reconstruction are all sound ideas that should be seriously considered and acted upon.

China favors and supports reform of **the UN human rights machinery**. In this reform, the prescription needs to be matched to the diagnosed malaise. It should focus on depoliticizing human rights questions, reducing confrontation and promoting cooperation so that more resources can be devoted to projects of technical cooperation and of national capacity-building in human rights. China believes that in its 60 years of existence, the Commission on Human Rights has been playing an important role in the field of international human rights; its role and contribution must not be dismissed lightly. Whether replacing the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller standing Human Rights Council can indeed correct the serious "credibility deficit" in the human rights field or make members of human rights bodies more accountable and more representative remains a question mark in the minds of many. Further earnest discussions are needed on this question.

China welcomes the Secretary-General's explanatory note on the proposed **Peacebuilding Commission**, which offered clarifications on some specifics and took on board some ideas put forward by member states. China supports in principle proposals on the Commission's functions contained in the note and is in agreement with the idea that the Commission is not appropriate to take on an early warning function and it should be advisory in nature. We welcome the proposal that the Commission should mainly report to the Security Council and transition should be made from the Security Council to ECOSOC at an appropriate stage; we believe this will help ensure the Commission's efficiency and effectiveness. The Note also put forward some general ideas on the composition of the Commission's core membership. The workability of the proposal for the core membership to comprise a sub-set of the Security Council and of ECOSOC members needs further study.

The Secretary-General's report referred to **governance of the global environment**. The international community should indeed pay greater attention than it has to sustainable development and the environment and work for the implementation of the goals of sustainable development. Governance of the global environment should at this stage be geared to helping the developing countries to meet their concerns and requirements in funding support, technology transfer and capacity-building in the environmental field. The focus should be on strengthening the coordination and cooperation among existing bodies engaged in environmental activities, enhancing their efficiency and promoting policy coherence.

China supports the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at achieving a capable and effective **Secretariat** through managerial improvements. We favor a simpler system of planning and budgeting, timely reviews of programmes and activities mandated by the GA to ensure the provision of resources adequate for the task under those programmes and activities and the effective use of limited resources. China agrees that the Secretary-General should exercise necessary managerial authority and flexibility in accordance with the Charter and relevant rules. At the same time we hope the Secretariat will enhance its managerial transparency, accountability and efficiency. China supports the strengthening of the independence and authority of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to enable it to fully perform its function of oversight and audits on the internal work of the Secretariat.

As far as **Charter amendment** is concerned, given the formal procedures involved and the gravity of any such undertaking, China believes that it should be considered in a comprehensive manner in the general framework of UN reform and be part of a package solution. China has serious reservations on the abolition of the Military Staff Committee. In light of changing international circumstances, the Committee should be given new functions; abolishing it outright is not a constructive step in the reform process. The good proposals made by Russia on strengthening the role of the Military Staff Committee in UN peacekeeping deserve careful study.

Mr. Facilitators,

The proposals for **Security Council reform** are both a focus of intense interest and a cause of deep divisions. Bridging the differences and setting reform on an even course require careful reflections by all sides. I wish to highlight the following points:

First, The profound changes that have taken place in the international balance of power call for an appropriate increase in the membership of the Security Council and improvement of its methods of work. This is needed to bring the Council into step with the times and enhance its ability to counter threats and challenges to international peace and security. Council expansion does not constitute the whole of Security Council reform. Reform must not only make the Council more representative but also contribute to its increased authority and efficiency and enhance its accountability and transparency.

Second, The reform of the Security Council involves huge stakes; it is a sensitive and complex matter that affects the vital interests of all States. Instead of addressing only the concerns of a small number of countries,

reform of the Council should take maximum account of the interests of all countries and regional groups. Priority should be given to an increase in the representation of the developing countries in the Council and to afford small and medium-sized countries more opportunities of participating in decision-making in the Council. Only when the interests of all sides are accommodated will reform win general trust and support.

Third, As long as a reform proposal meets the above-mentioned criteria, China will be open to its consideration. Of the two options proposed by the High-level Panel, some member states give their support to Option A, while others are more inclined toward Option B. Members are motivated by different considerations and are deeply divided over the issue. Under this circumstance, we believe that the exploration of new alternatives should be contemplated. China welcomes any reasonable new options in this regard and believes that common interests should inspire all countries to accommodate each other's concerns, demonstrate flexibility and strive for compromise.

Fourth, The reform of the Security Council should be characterized by democracy, in-depth consideration, patient consultation and the achievement of the broadest possible consensus. Consensus certainly does not mean unanimity among all 191 member states. On the other hand, when some countries favor one option while others oppose it or support another option, there is evidently no consensus to speak of. Consensus gives an indicative measure of support; more important, it calls for the search of compromise and common understanding. Any reform proposal shy of 90% or greater support and endorsement can hardly qualify as a consensus proposal.

Fifth, The reform of the Security Council should proceed with deliberation and be allowed to come to unhurried fruition. It is only natural that differences exist over issues of Security Council reform. What's important is for all sides to seek common ground through consultation and dialogue. Difficulties and major differences of views should not make the reform bogged down or shelved. Imposing any reform proposal on which members are deeply divided is equally unacceptable. For this reason, China is opposed to setting an artificial timeframe for reform and rejects forcing through a reform proposal still lacking broad consensus by means of a vote.

Sixth, The reform of the Security Council should serve the long-term interests of the United Nations as a whole. More and more countries are now becoming worried by the prospect that debate and controversy over Security Council reform could not only lead to a rift among the member states but also marginalize or even harm the consultations on other important questions, particularly those concerning development. Should the United Nations be dragged into divisive fight over the reform of the Security Council, the original purpose of this reform would be totally defeated; such an outcome would neither bode well for the upholding of the authority of the Security Council nor for the reform of the United Nations as a whole. This point must be brought home to all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Facilitators.