

**Statement by  
Ambassador Mehdi Danesh –Yazdi, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic  
Republic of Iran  
at the informal thematic consultations of the General Assembly  
on the Report of the Secretary-General, "In Larger Freedom- Towards Development,  
Security and Human Rights for All"  
CLUSTER IV issues (Institutional reform)**

**New York ,May 02, 2005**

-----

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

**Mr. Facilitator,**

Allow me to begin by extending our sincere thanks to you and other distinguished Facilitator for having convened this meeting and wish you all the success in the important task you are entrusted with.

My delegation, through active participation in previous deliberations, has already pronounced its positions on different parts of the Report of the Secretary General. By stressing on the validity of those positions and also endorsing the statements made by Malaysia and Jamaica on behalf of NAM and G77, I wish to take this opportunity to further elaborate our position on the issues enlisted under cluster IV.

1. We all agree that the institutional reform of the Organization is imperative to make this august body more correspondent and responsive to the needs and challenges of the day. The outcome of this reform is undeniably of high significance to all Member States. But, a satisfactory and fruitful outcome cannot be achieved without a thorough analysis of the different aspects of the reform in an all-inclusive and transparent manner.

2. Revitalization of the General Assembly lies at the heart of institutional reform of the Organization. We agree with the Secretary General that the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, must become more effective through enhancing its contribution to the Organization's activities. This objective can not be realized without restoring the authorities of the Assembly stipulated by the Charter, particularly the authority in law-making and norm-setting on various issues on the agenda of the UN. In this context, streamlining the agenda of the Assembly and the structure of its committees is a task that should not result in minimizing the authority of the Assembly, diminishing its current role and functioning, or undermining its relevance and credibility.

Rationalization of the General Assembly's agenda and working methods is of greater importance. Indeed, the crux of the revitalization of the Assembly relates to restoring and strengthening its authorities and roles within the United Nations system. Therefore, efforts to reform the Assembly should aim at restoring its Charter-based mandate as well as ending the continuing shifting of the issues under its agenda to other UN organs, particularly the Security Council and the Secretariat.

3. We believe that the Report's approach towards the reform of the Security Council is incomprehensive and imbalanced. To be more representative, the Council's membership should increase to reflect the realities of the present era. However, we are of the view that the reform of the Council should not be confined only to the question of membership. Over the years, the majority of Member States have insisted on the necessity, and even urgency, of the improvement of the Council's working methods, decision-making process as well as its agenda to reflect the concerns and interests of the whole membership. Contrary to this persistent and legitimate endeavor, the Report has astonishingly neglected this vital aspect of the Council's reform.

In our view, the institutional reform of the UN can not neglect to take on board the working methods of the Security Council. The Council, as the primary Organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, should perform this huge responsibility in a transparent, unbiased and participatory fashion. Thus, efforts should be made to enhance openness, accountability and efficiency of all activities of the Council. This requires a true political will and commitment on the part of the Council's members, especially its permanent ones.

A particular area of concern in the work of the Council is its increasing inclination to resort to Chapter VII as an umbrella to address issues which do not necessarily pose an immediate threat to international peace and security. Regrettably, provisions of Articles 41 and 42 of the Charter, in some cases, have been too quickly invoked by the Council, while the other options had not been fully exhausted. The current process of the reform is a ripe opportunity to address this issue adequately

Increasing the members of the Security Council to make it more representative also bears particular importance, not only from the perspective of increased efficiency, but also to ensure the representation of the main forms of civilizations, including the adequate representation of the Islamic countries in an expanded Council. Moreover, we continue to believe that the use of veto is an anachronistic and undemocratic privilege which should be curtailed with a view to its eventual elimination.

4. We share the Secretary General's feeling on the "declining credibility and professionalism" of the Human Rights Commission. This unfavorable situation is indeed the product of politicization of the Commission's work by certain group of countries through application of gross selectivity and double-standards. A pertinent question arises whether the proposed human rights council would be able to rectify the shortcomings of the Human Rights Commission. The answer, in our view, is not affirmative.

The problem underlying the Commission on Human Rights is not the size of its membership, or its heavily-loaded agenda, or even its inability to fulfill its important mandate. The members of the Commission are elected on the established election criteria and procedures of the Organization. The smaller membership of the proposed Human Rights Council will certainly deprive the large majority of the Organization from participating in and contributing to the UN human rights machinery. We are extremely hesitant that the proposed Council with a limited membership, if established, would guarantee to remedy the shortcomings of the present Commission by avoiding politicization, application of double-standards and selectivity in its

work. We feel that it may even further marginalize the developing countries in yet another important forum within the UN. In fact, this deficiency can be cured through appropriate process of reform and revitalization of the Commission to be undertaken by Member States, without necessarily replacing it with a new body.

5. Strengthening the ECOSOC, in order to enhance its efficiency and responsiveness and to meet the emerging challenges, is an imperative. The Charter, as the Secretary General has appropriately emphasized, gives this organ a range of important functions that involve coordination, policy review and policy dialogue. By the same token, we concur with the Secretary General that the Economic and Social Council is the only organ of the United Nations explicitly mandated by the Charter to coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies and to consult with non-governmental organizations.

The Report of the Secretary-General leads us to the right direction with respect to measures to strengthen the ECOSOC, provided that it would result in a meaningful balance in the overall functioning of different United Nations organs. There is also a need for bolder action on a wider front extending to those institutions directing policies relating to trade, monetary and financial issues. The time has come for reforms that would open the way for developing countries to exercise greater influence on the formulation of policies affecting global economic relations. More inclusive decision-making arrangements are needed to facilitate a more sensitive and responsive approach to development needs, especially among the Breton Woods institutions.

The proposals of the Report which seek to have ECOSOC more focused on the development issues are worth to consider. However, these should not alter the mandate and the scope of the work of the ECOSOC, as stipulated in the Charter. We should bear in mind that ECOSOC is entrusted with the system-wide coordination responsibility as well as mandates on social, economic, human rights and environmental issues. Therefore, care should be taken to strengthen it and to avoid its downgrading into a functional commission.

6. My delegations is of the view that proposals pertaining to the Secretariat on the review of mandates older than five years, one-time staff buyout, review of the budget and human resources rules, management reforms and review of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) require a comprehensive examination by the fifth Committee upon the submission of detailed clarifications.

7. System coherence of the United Nations at the country level as well as the question of resident coordinator system have already been addressed in two consecutive resolutions of the General Assembly on Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development (A/56/201& A/59/250). In light of these resolutions, the UN funds and programs have introduced many constructive reforms to bring more coherence and harmonization to their activities. We think that the recent TCPR resolution is a good basis for the continuation of those reforms and for strengthening the resident coordinator system. To this effect, ideas such as grouping of the various agencies, funds and programs and possible elimination or merger of those funds, programs and agencies which have complementary or overlapping mandates seem to be inappropriate at this juncture.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that the reform process in the context of operational activities should always focus on long term development challenges and achieve concrete development results. We share the Secretary General's view that the increase of core funding and reduction of the proportion of earmarked funds will increase coherence in the system. Needless to say that the United Nations development system should benefit commensurately from recent and possible future increases in ODA, in order to fulfill the task entrusted to it in the implementation of internationally agreed development goals.

8. The proposal of the Secretary General on the governance of the global environment requires an in-depth and thorough analysis, especially when different and divergent views on the root causes of this issue are yet to be reconciled. The issue of international environmental governance, including a new global entity or agency on environment, has been dealt with comprehensively in the International Environment Governance (IEG) process leading to the Johannesburg Summit. Recognizing the broad system implication of the issue of universal membership, the Summit mandated the General Assembly to consider this important idea. Consequently, the issue of universal membership of UNEP Governing Council was decided to be considered substantively at the 61st Session of the General Assembly.

9. A natural hazard in a developed country may leave no or very little human toll behind, while the same hazard with less density in a developing country might inflict huge devastation and a great loss of life. This is the case even with the contagious diseases. Crises and conflicts are also prevalent in less developed areas. These are all symptoms of under-development. We admire the UN leadership as well as the humanitarian community in coordinating, providing and promoting the humanitarian assistances all over the world. We also support provision and allocation of sufficient humanitarian resources to respective cases provided that it would not affect the resources that are usually allocated to development.

In our view, the concept of "protecting humanitarian space" is a controversial recommendation that requires a thorough and careful examination. We should ensure that this concept would not pave the ground for certain powers' intervention in the internal affairs of the developing countries – the situation which we all have to avoid.

10. We welcome the Report's call for greater cooperation of the regional organizations with the UN. However, regional or international security is often a multidimensional issue which cannot be delegated a priori to regional organizations. Rather, full compliance with the relevant provisions of the UN Charter is the *conditio sine qua non* for any delegation of authority to the regional organizations. In this context, the recent developments in certain regional organizations raise the question of what responsibilities or values might be shared between the UN and such organizations.

**Mr. Facilitator,**

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate that, in my delegation's view, it is the sole responsibility of UN Member States to make final decisions on the reform of the United Nations, and the General Assembly has a unique role to play in this process. Clearly, such an important task can not be fulfilled in a hasty manner.

**Thank you**