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**Ad-hoc Working Group
Revitalization of the General Assembly**

INDIA STATEMENT
Ambassador Tanmaya Lal
Deputy Permanent Representative

New York

February 20, 2017

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Ambassador Tanmaya Lal,
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Distinguished Co-Chairs,

I thank you for convening this meeting on the revitalization of the General Assembly, which is an integral part of the much-needed and long-awaited reform of the United Nations.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Group.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

The General Assembly is the closest thing to a global parliament that mankind has been able to achieve so far. As the chief deliberative body of the United Nations, it is the highest expression of the collective will and aspirations of the peoples of this world.

The UN Charter had conceived the General Assembly as a global agenda-setter, an active promoter of friendly relations, a keen problem-solver and an effective agent of all-round development.

However, the GA has steadily lost touch with its core responsibilities and is increasingly involved only with processes rather than substance; pious expressions rather than leadership and concrete action.

The role and the authority of the GA are being progressively undermined by the expansive role and activism of the Security Council, much beyond what is laid down in the UN Charter.

This is not a healthy development for the continued success and relevance of the highest form of multilateralism that the UN represents.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Since at least the early 1990s, we have collectively struggled with the concept of 'revitalization' of the General Assembly. On how to preserve its role and authority and what should be its appropriate relationship to the other principal organs of the UN.

Much water has flowed in the East River behind the UN headquarters in the last three decades, but unfortunately we are still talking in aspirational terms about this issue.

Faith in the United Nations cannot be restored until it is reformed to reflect the contemporary realities. The GA, as the chief deliberative and policy-making body reflecting our collective will, occupies a pre-eminent place in this process.

While the overall progress on the GA revitalization has been slow and marginal, the recent changes introduced in the selection process of the UN Secretary General are encouraging and need to be pursued further.

We need to strive for such concrete changes in various aspects of the role, authority and functioning of the GA to regain the leadership role envisaged for it.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

If the GA is conceived as a form of a Global Parliament, the processes of balloting for elections that are conducted in the GA may be a useful place to begin to address issues relating to its working methods.

Our submission to you is to consider examining the electoral practices and mechanisms that we are currently following at the time of casting ballots in the GA Hall. We are sure many will have interesting insights on different aspects of this sacred duty that all of us perform regularly in the GA. These could be considered as part of the rubric relating to working methods.

Collectively, it is time for us to consider if we can fine tune the system of balloting in the General Assembly in accordance with the needs of our times. When we discuss these matters, later in our deliberations, our delegation intends to review aspects of the current situation and submit specific suggestions for consideration of this august working group. It is our intention to make proposals that are focused primarily at emphasizing the sanctity of the balloting process in the General Assembly.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

These are some initial practical suggestions. We may try and identify more such specific issues to address working methods of the GA and its broader role and authority.

Without effective reform, the UNGA will remain, at best, a marginal player in solving the great problems of our times. We must proactively work collectively to restore the pre-eminence of the United Nations together with a revitalized and reinvigorated General Assembly as its chief policy-making body.

My delegation will continue to actively participate in and lend its full support to such an effort.

Thank you.
