

February 19, 2009, UNITED NATIONS (NEW YORK): – Claiming to be "confused" and "disappointed" by the purported commencement of intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Permanent Representative Camillo Gonsalves urged Member States to respect the spirit and letter of previous decisions by devoting themselves to substantive progress in the coming months.

Speaking in an informal plenary session of the United General Assembly, which was announced as the start of the negotiating process for Security Council reform, Ambassador Gonsalves was unimpressed. "Today's meeting - to our ears - is indistinguishable from the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) meetings of previous months and years," said Ambassador Gonsalves. "Member States are again reiterating broad principles in general statements that cannot, even by the most generous interpretation, be considered negotiation."

Ambassador Gonsalves also suggested that the General Assembly was deviating from the spirit and letter of the historic September 15, 2008 decision to commence intergovernmental negotiations on reform on the Council. Reminding the Membership that substantive negotiations were supposed to begin by the end of February, the Ambassador said, "this meeting, at best, represents only the most technical compliance with [the] Decision. . . strict and faithful adherence to the spirit and letter of Decision 62/557 is critical to its ongoing legitimacy and our collective success."

The Vincentian Permanent Representative also requested that the President of the General Assembly generate a composite text, containing the positions of all Member States, as an effective starting point for substantive negotiations. He took the opportunity to remind the General Assembly that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines considered "greater representation of the developing countries, including island and small States" to be an essential element of the negotiating process.

Following brief remarks made at a January 29th meeting on Security Council Reform, Ambassador Gonsalves' most recent statement marks the eighth Vincentian intervention on the issue since April 2008. Ambassador Gonsalves also discussed the issue extensively in a November 19, 2008 Statement on the Report of the Security Council ( [YouTube Video](#) ).

