Remarks by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan

at the informal consultations of the Open Ended Working Group on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council held on 3 May 2007 to consider the Report of the Facilitators to the President of the General Assembly

Madam President.

I shall start by not offering a history lesson, but will recall some recent history. A Dinner was hosted by the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Italy on 20 September last year to which all UN member states were invited to consider the issue of Security Council reform. Both the President and the Prime Minister suggested that it was time for UN membership to search for a compromise solution achieved through consensus. You (President of the General Assembly) had agreed to lead the process. We would like to thank you for living up to your promise and for appointing the five Facilitators for your work on what is a very difficult and complex issue.

We agree that their (Facilitators’) views contained in the Report are reflection of their honest opinion, and we do not cast aspersions on their intellect or integrity.

The report proposes a comprehensive approach to reform of the Security Council incorporating expansion and improvement in working methods, which has been the agreement for several years among the membership.

Most importantly, the report has offered certain notions on the way forward. These have created a bit of commotion (among the earlier speakers). Many of these notions are consistent with the long held views in the General Assembly. For example, the need for a comprehensive reform, demonstration of flexibility by all, a viable compromise solution with widest possible political acceptance well above the required (2/3rd) majority, addressing the concerns of the wide majority, and increased chances of representation for the wide majority addressing in particular the under-representation of the developing and small countries.

Madam President, the report is premised on the need to a compromise and finding an interim solution which would bypass the maximalist positions of parties. All four options mentioned in the report exclude the maximalist demands including the demand for permanent membership or presence on the Council.

Most have accepted the report as a basis for further work. We note the statement by African States that terms the Report as a basis to break the impasse on the reform of the Security Council.

But some statements have sought to question, distort or change the framework of the compromise approach proposed by the report. Some have called for negotiations but at the same time talked about a vote. What do they want – vote or negotiations? We cannot
have both. Some say they are flexible but then reaffirm the demand for permanent seats. Some say they accept the report but then reinterpret the report in a manner that amounts to its rejection. Some have presented a strange logic and bizarre interpretation that the requirement of support well over the needed majority or the widest possible support amounts to a vote. This is not understandable.

It has been said that the views of the majority have not been reflected on the issue of expansion in the two categories – permanent and non-permanent. Actually there are not two categories but several kinds of categories, e.g. permanent with veto, permanent presence but without veto, long term seats, medium term seats with re-election, re-election limited, short term seats with re-election (limited or unlimited).

If one were to speak of the majority, look around. The majority of members of the General Assembly are small and medium sized states. They are not demanding permanent membership or presence on the Council.

If we are to move forward and maintain the momentum, we cannot change the report now or arbitrarily reinterpret it. Either we accept it as a basis for further work or we do not. We cannot have it both ways.

My delegation is prepared, on the basis of the report, to explore a compromise within the framework of the premise i.e. an interim compromise solution utilizing the options it has outlined.

We are not in favor of appointment of new facilitators, as it would amount to a vote of no confidence in the 5 Facilitators and in you as well. We wish to entrust you to conduct further consultations in order to agree on the format and modalities of further consultations to take the momentum and the process forward.

We invite you to hold consultations in such an open and inclusive process, which could facilitate the evolution of convergence around an option that commands the widest possible support, if not consensus.

At the same time, while such consultations and efforts are underway, there must be clear understanding and assurance that no pre-emptive moves or arbitrary proposals will be made by anyone. Such moves will destroy and derail the process of compromise, and once again divide the membership of the UN, with the consequences we all witnessed in 2005.