

**Statement by Ambassador Aamir Khan, Acting Permanent
Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, in the UN Security
Council Arria formula meeting on the pen holder system.
(August 11, 2022, New York)**

Mr. Chair,

I would like to thank Russian Federation for organizing this important Arria-formula meeting on penholder system in the United Nations Security Council, which is of great importance and direct relevance to entire UN membership not just the Council members.

I also wish to applaud those members of the Council, like Kuwait, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Albania, Russia and all others, who during their membership of the Council either worked or continue to work for improving the working methods of the Council with a view to adequately reflect the voice of the entire UN membership at the Council.

The Charter of the United Nations has entrusted the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

To fulfill this responsibility effectively, the Security Council must adapt and be more transparent, accountable, inclusive and democratic, and make more efforts to improve its working methods to keep up pace with the change of circumstances and enhance its capacity and efficiency.

In this regard, penholder system is one of the key aspects of any reformed Security Council.

At present, the penholders system represents interests of a few member states rather than of all. It is based on a practice that is advanced by a few and is devoid of expectations that the wider UN membership has from the collective security system of the UN Charter. This situation has given rise to unlawful practices that run contrary not only to the established principles of the UN Charter but also prevent the Council from working objectively. The most glaring impact of current practice is on Security Council decisions which are often drafted in small groups (mostly penholders) and presented as fate accompli.

Penholder system in essence enables the holder of the pen to take leadership over a situation on the agenda of the Council and to control the structure and core content of a resolution that does not represent the view of UN's wider membership.

Mr. Chair,

We must take cognizance of the fact that the current penholder system lacks the criteria for a fair and just working method - One which is based on the principles of fairness and equality of member states, as reflected in the UN Charter. We have seen too often that some of the customary practices at the UN which include the working methods of the Security Council are non transparent, discriminatory and unjustified.

We believe that a systematic restructuring of the penholder arrangement is essential. Penholders and co-penholders should be both from the permanent and non-permanent members, who should engage closely with the countries concerned, fellow Council members, and the relevant departments of the Secretariat, so as to maximize consensus and avert confrontation.

Achieving a more balanced division of labor for penholdership is not simply a question of inclusiveness, but also a question of Council's legitimacy, its credibility and effectiveness of its decisions. We note that discussions have been ongoing for some years now on the necessity of expanding the penholder system to include more elected members and make it more inclusive. However, this is far from a systematic practice. We, therefore, support the call of all those who have called today for placing this topic on the agenda of the Council for discussion to finding practical solutions.

Mr. Chair,

Another issue is of involvement of not just E-10 members but also of non-members in Council meetings. Our Indian colleague today talked about addressing the issue of lack of participation of E-10 members as penholders. But allow me to say that sometimes even a President of the Council despite the agreement of other Council members does not allow a non-member to take part in the discussions, which are directly related to that non-member. Such was the case of Security Council's meeting on Afghanistan last year when the President of the Council prevented Pakistan from participating in the Council meeting despite all other members of the Council agreeing to Pakistan's participation at that meeting.

This clearly demonstrates that the Council has become more ‘cloistered’, used by some for geostrategic reasons, which puts into question the Council’s role to act “on behalf of all UN member states.

This also validates our long-held and principled view that the already exclusive and elitist culture of the Council – with outcomes mostly determined by its permanent members – can be changed, not by seating new permanent members on the Council but by enhancing its representatives, openness and inclusive decision-making through the expansion and empowerment of “elected” non-permanent members.

It is in the interest of everyone to seek a more democratic, effective and credible mechanism for the maintenance of international peace and security through a comprehensive reform of the Security Council. We believe that Security Council should reflect interest of the wider UN membership.
