

Statement by External Affairs Minister on India's election to UNSC

External Affairs Minister (Shri S.M. Krishna): Friends, Good evening to all of you. I appreciate your presence here at this late hour in the evening.

I am happy to have this opportunity to inform you of India's election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for a period of two years beginning January 1, 2011. In the elections held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York a short while ago, India received 187 votes, the highest among the countries standing for election to the Security Council as non-permanent members. This represents over 98% of the total membership of the UN and is well ahead of the required 128 votes. This resounding endorsement of India's candidature at the United Nations serves as a reaffirmation, if any were needed, of the overwhelming support that India enjoys in the international community. On behalf of the Government of India, I extend my sincere thanks to the overwhelming number of the UN Member States who have supported us.

India will take over the Asian seat in the Security Council vacated by Japan at the end of this year. It will re-enter the Security Council after an interregnum of nearly two decades.

There have been significant changes in the international scene since India last served on the Security Council. India has been integral to some of the important processes that induced these changes in the context of the financial and economic architecture, major shifts at the world trade and climate change negotiations as well as the recalibration of the global regime for civilian nuclear cooperation. The overwhelming support we have received is recognition of India's contribution to these and other developments and, in turn, reflects the expectations of the international community from India. This support is also reflected in the formal endorsement for the UNSC non-permanent seat we received from the Asian Group in February 2010.

Let me now turn briefly to our priorities during our term in the UN Security Council.

The UN Security Council is at the centre of global politics. It is the principal organ of the United Nations entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. India's traditional wisdom and desire to contribute to international peace and amity will result in our being the voice of moderation and constructive engagement in the decisions of the Security Council.

We live in a troubled neighbourhood. Our immediate priorities in the Council will include peace and stability in our near and extended neighbourhood, including Afghanistan, the Middle East and Africa, Counter-terrorism, including the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors, and the strengthening UN peacekeeping.

It is of significance to note that, for the first time, the Security Council will witness the simultaneous presence of all BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) countries, and three of the four G4 countries (India, Brazil and Germany). The Council will also include a number of developing countries with which we have close ties as well as some of our global strategic partners.

India will also continue to work with like-minded countries and groups for bringing about much needed structural reform to the UN Security Council.

India offers a unique and unparalleled example of nation-building. We are willing to share our experience in nation-building with the world.

I have absolutely no doubt that we will utilize our tenure to provide a sense of satisfaction to all our partners and obtain their reaffirmation of the need for a permanent presence for India on the Security Council.

Membership of the UN Security Council, of course, entails higher responsibility. We will live up to that. India will also not only bring ability but add to the legitimacy of the Security Council and be pro-active on tackling the scourge of terrorism and strengthening the UN's peacekeeping and peace-building efforts. We will demonstrate

to the international community that India on the Security Council is good for the world.

As a founding member of the United Nations, India is fully committed to the principles and purposes of the UN. As the world's largest democracy, a major contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, strong votary of the rights of developing countries, advocate for human rights and the rule of law, universal disarmament and respect for international law, voice of moderation and firm believer in the peaceful settlement of disputes, India has excellent credentials to serve on the UN Security Council. During its forthcoming term in the Security Council, India will discharge its obligations as a responsible member of the international community by remaining fully and actively engaged on all issues before the Council.

Thank you.