REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

Statement by
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At the Security Council Open Debate on Maintenance of International Peace and Security:

Strengthening Multilateralism and the Role of the United Nations

November 9th 2018
Mr. President,

1. I congratulate the People’s Republic of China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I also thank you for convening this open debate on a topical issue that cannot be over discussed. I recall the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of China during the General Debate of the high level week this September where he emphasized the importance and necessity of multilateralism. Therefore it comes as no surprise that you chose to hold this debate during the earliest days of your presidency.

2. I also thank Secretary General Antonio Guterres for his statement and his evident commitment to ensuring that the United Nations continues to play its central role in facilitating multilateralism.

Mr. President,

3. Global governance is characterized by political and security interdependence. Most contemporary challenges- be it terrorism, climate change, migration, transnational organized crimes, and many others cannot be effectively addressed without multilateral cooperation.

4. The formation of the United Nations, and its evolution over the years, has shown us that multilateralism is an essential ingredient for a peaceful world. The authors of the UN Charter were not mistaken when they set off in this great document by recalling the horrors and pains of the scourge of war, which we unfortunately so easily forget. They did not envisage how much the international system would
evolve, and they didn’t have to- their bitter experience convinced them that multilateralism was the only way to save mankind from destruction. And they were right. This is the true spirit of this organization. The purposes and principles of the UN Charter enhance this vision and practice of multilateralism by encouraging states to pursue cooperation over isolation, peaceful settlement of disputes over war, and the pursuit of a common vision where member states relate as equals.

5. But the world is a dynamic place, and history is always on the move. New challenges have emerged over the years and require us to adapt to it. I am reminded of the words of the legendary Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, ‘Eneke the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching.’ We too as the nations of the world must learn to adapt and address evolving challenges. In this regard, I will make two brief points:

Mr. President,

1. While we are all pursuing our national interests, at the core of it all, we need to build on the fact that the people we serve have common aspirations. They want to live in a peaceful, sustainable and dignified world. Let us build on these mutual aspirations rather than focus on myopic goals. In this regard, Rwanda calls for continued cooperation between the UN and regional organizations. For instance, the recently signed Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security is a good example of effective cooperation.

2. Strengthening multilateralism calls for inclusion and better representation of all UN Member States. Reforms of the UN in all its components are more about its relevance. Reforms cannot be conducted by weakening the
multilateral system, but rather by strengthening it through more inclusion, cooperation, respect and dialogue, to reform existing rules where there is need.

Mr. President

6. In conclusion, we have all that it takes to resolve our contemporary challenges. Nothing is alien to us, there is no unbridled force that we are dealing with, and we as member states of the United Nations all have the responsibility and the prerogative to protect multilateralism while continuing to improve it. I reaffirm Rwanda’s commitment to multilateralism and the equality of states.

I thank you for your kind attention.