Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Permit me to also compliment your efforts at guiding the process of intergovernmental negotiations.

The courage, leadership and commitment that you have displayed have played an invaluable role. We count on your continued guidance in making genuine progress at the earliest.

Mr. Chairman,

As we meet here today, in this first meeting in a new decade, there is a palpable sense that we are at the cusp of a possible decisive phase in the reform process.

 Developments over the past month since we last met have clearly underscored the consensus that exists on urgently moving forward on UNSC reform, particularly through text-based negotiations.

Driving this momentum has, of course, been the letter co-signed by 139 countries, including my own. We appreciate that you have recognized the historic nature of this initiative and circulated it along with your letter.
The purport of the letter is simple. It seeks to empower you to move the negotiation process forward by presenting a text that can serve as the basis for negotiations.

We are encouraged that the UFC countries and others have also supported this initiative and expressed their readiness to engage in text-based negotiations.

This clearly demonstrates the across-the-board desire for taking immediate actions towards transformative change in the UNSC.

The fact that the current composition and structure of the UNSC does not permit it to address the challenges of the 21st century is beyond question.

It is imperative that any remedy to this must be commensurate with the scale and depth of the problem and truly address the shortcomings.

It is no use providing palliatives for the symptoms rather than treating the underlying malaise.

It is only through genuine and comprehensive reform that such underlying problems can be addressed.

And we all must acknowledge such a reform needs to make the UNSC reflect contemporary realities, including through an expansion in its permanent membership and non-permanent membership, and an improvement in its working methods.

This is the view that the overwhelming majority shares, and has been reflected repeatedly in the negotiations till now.

Tinkering with the margins will not lead us to our common goal of genuine reform. This has been tried in the past, without success.

It is crucial that we all come together to ensure that this key organ of the UN, and indeed the UN at large, does not become irrelevant because it could not adapt to the times.
Mr. Chairman,

The entire membership now looks to you for providing at the earliest a document that can be the basis for negotiations.

We are happy at your clarification that the next round of negotiations will be text based.

This text must faithfully reflect the progress made in the negotiations from March last year. This would be in keeping with the unanimous decision 63/565 that we adopted last September, wherein we decided to build on the progress achieved in the negotiations during the 63rd session.

And while it is useful to hold consultations on the possible contours of such a text, we must caution against procedural discussions blocking the common desire for urgent movement.

I would like to take this opportunity to respond in an interactive mode to the comments made earlier today to illustrate that we must not enter into procedural discussions that could slow down our progress.

One of my colleagues stated that the ratio of permanent to non-permanent members must remain at 1:2, and hence argued against creating 6 new permanent members. However, when the UNSC was created, there were 5 permanent members and 6 non permanent members viz. a ratio of 5:6.

A review was mandated after 10 years. Yet, in 1963, all that the mandated review was able to achieve was an enlargement of the non-permanent membership from 6 to 10.

Do we seriously believe, 27 years later, that a similar tinkering will help restore the credibility of the UNSC and achieve genuine reform?

The other issue relates to signatories of the letter co-signed by 139 countries. This needs to be placed in perspective.

This was not an initiative of a “small group of countries”, but rather captured the sentiment of a large number of countries to break the
impasse on UNSC reform. I personally canvassed support for it, including among members of the UFC, as my distinguished friend from Pakistan graciously admitted.

The list of signatories is still open, and any delegation that feels it was not invited is free to sign-up even now. Even after the letter was delivered, some delegations have signed and more may be forthcoming.

The third point is that the letter has sent a clear message, though it was not its original intent, that those who are opposed to reform per se should reconsider their position.

In our view, the simplest way to proceed would be through a text, with options that have some reasonable degree of support, and hence the potential to become an area of convergence.

Naturally, all the proposals made would remain on the table. Perhaps these could be presented as an annex to the negotiating text.

Mr. Chairman,

During this fourth round, you have requested us to identify areas of convergence.

It is now clear that there is complete convergence on the need for a negotiating text by the Chair. Discussions on details of proposals should be relegated to the text-based negotiating stage.

We, therefore, look forward to such a negotiating text well before the fifth round of negotiations commence.

We should be cognizant, Mr. Chairman, that after 15 years of meandering around in the OEWG process, and at the end of four rounds of intergovernmental negotiations that have clarified positions of all delegations, the membership at large is now eagerly waiting to engage in real negotiations based on a text.

This is a truly significant development in the long and arduous road of UNSC reform.
We are confident that with your continued effort, a decisive breakthrough can take place soon. It is important that we take the necessary steps to impart an irreversible momentum to the process.

My delegation has full confidence in your ability to provide the necessary catalyst through a text for negotiations.

Thank you.