

India to host 'very substantive and significant' G-4 Summit

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New York: India will host a "very substantive and significant" summit meeting of the G-4 nations aimed at pushing for early UN Security Council reforms in the wake of the UN General Assembly adopting a decision to commence text-based negotiations on the long-pending reforms.

The G-4 summit on September 26 will be the first since 2004 and will bring together German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Asoke Mukerji said the summit has "come together as an event" only after the September 14 consensus adoption by the UN General Assembly of a negotiating document and the decision to commence text-based negotiations in the current session.

The high-level summit "conveys its own message that the G-4 nations can play a role in galvanizing broad based support for the outcome of the negotiations which will start in November this year," Mr Mukerji said.

"The G-4 summit is a very important engagement," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Vikas Swarup told reporters.

"We regard this very very substantive and very significant especially in the light of the fact that the UNGA recently passed a decision calling for text-based negotiations and presenting a text on the basis of which the negotiations on the Inter-governmental format can take place," he said.

Mr Mukerji said the main focus of the summit is to "build" on the UNGA's adoption of a negotiating text on UNSC reforms.

"The leaders will decide during that meeting on the way forward," Mr Mukerji said, adding that an outcome is expected.

Sounding an "optimistic" note, Mr Mukerji said he assumes that the process of negotiations should conclude "as the Prime Minister has called for" with a concrete outcome on the reforms by the end of the 70th UNGA session next September.

He said that the speed at which the process moves forward will depend on the UN member states but "our effort will be that by the end of the 70th session in September 2016, the final text should be tabled in the Assembly for adoption.

On the US support to India, Mr Swarup said while there are various templates for UNSC reform, the end product with India as a permanent member has Washington's "unwavering" support.

Prime Minister Modi is also expected to seek enhanced role for peacekeeping contributing countries like India in the UN's decision making process on its peacekeeping operations.

PM Modi is likely to make a statement on September 28 at UN Peacekeeping Summit convened by President Barack Obama in New York.

India has been the single largest contributors of troops to UN peacekeeping operations. This year India will pass 185,000 cumulatively rotated through UN system, he said.

The Peacekeeping Summit will also be attended by Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The summit will provide a forum for the leaders of India and Pakistan to come face-to-face.

Refuting reports that PM Modi is deliberately skipping the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, Mr Mukerji said in the past there has been precedence for this whenever there is a high-level summit on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

Now that there is a UN Summit on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, it is important for New Delhi to focus on this because the biggest canvas for implementing its agenda is India, he said.

- PTI