

Opening Statement of Governor Nikki Haley
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
January 18, 2017

Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Cardin, distinguished members of the committee.

I come before you today both humbled and honored to be considered to represent the United States of America at the United Nations. Just as other nominees for this position have done, I am here to outline my vision and discuss my qualifications.

My story is an American story. I was born in Bamberg, South Carolina, the daughter of immigrants from Punjab, India. My parents had comfortable lives in India, but they chose to give up those comforts and move to America with just eight dollars because of the freedoms and opportunities this country offers. Our family's experience is unique, but it is also familiar, because it is one that has been repeated many times, by many people, in American history.

Growing up in a small rural community in the South, our family was different. We were not white enough to be white, not black enough to be black. My father wore a turban, my mother a sari. Our new neighbors didn't quite know what to make of us, and so we faced challenges. But those challenges paled next to the abundance of opportunities in front of us.

My Dad was a professor at a small, historically black college. My Mom was a social studies teacher and started a clothing store from scratch. I started doing the books for the family business when I was thirteen. It wasn't until I got to college that I realized that wasn't normal, but it was normal to me – in my family, we worked. I was also privileged to take advantage of the educational opportunities America affords. I am painfully aware that the chance for thirteen-year old girls to read and learn and grow is something that does not exist in far too many places around the world today.

I went on to serve in the South Carolina General Assembly and to be elected and reelected governor of the Palmetto state. Serving the people of South Carolina has been the greatest honor of my life. During the six years of my governorship, our state has faced many challenges, but South Carolina today is stronger economically and more united culturally than it has ever been before. I couldn't be more proud.

While South Carolina will always be my home, I am eager to begin this new chapter.

International diplomacy is a new area for me. There is much I am learning about the intricacies of the UN and its associated agencies. I don't claim that I know everything, or that leadership at the UN is the same as leading South Carolina.

But diplomacy itself is not new to me. In fact, I would suggest there is nothing more important to a governor's success than her ability to unite those with different backgrounds, viewpoints, and objectives behind a common purpose. For six years that has been my work, day after day, in times of celebration and in times of great tragedy.

I have negotiated deals with some of the largest corporations in the world, and convinced them to make South Carolina their home. I have been the Chief Executive of a government with more than 67,000 employees and an annual budget of more than \$26 billion. And we have achieved real results. South Carolina is a different, stronger, better place than it was six years ago.

Like most government agencies, the United Nations could benefit from a fresh set of eyes. I will take an outsider's look at the institution. As I have in every challenge in my life, I will come to the UN to work – and to work smart.

I will bring a firm message to the UN that U.S. leadership is essential in the world. It is essential for the advancement of humanitarian goals, and for the advancement of America's national interests. When America fails to lead, the world becomes a more dangerous place. And when the world becomes more dangerous, the American people become more vulnerable. At the UN, as elsewhere, the United States is the indispensable voice of freedom. It is time that we once again find that voice.

The job of UN Ambassador is different from being a governor, but there is one essential element of leadership that is the same, and that is accountability. A leader must be accountable to the people she serves. Should you confirm me as Ambassador, I will be accountable, first and foremost, to the people of the United States.

Mr. Chairman, accountability means being honest with ourselves. As I appear before you today, when we look at the United Nations, we see a checkered history.

The UN and its specialized agencies have had numerous successes. Its health and food programs have saved millions of lives. Its weapons monitoring efforts have provided us with vital security information. Its peacekeeping missions have, at times, performed valuable services.

However, any honest assessment also finds an institution that is often at odds with American national interests and American taxpayers.

Nowhere has the UN's failure been more consistent and more outrageous than in its bias against our close ally Israel. In the General Assembly session just completed, the UN adopted twenty resolutions against Israel and only six targeting the rest of the world's countries combined. In the past ten years, the Human Rights Council has passed 62 resolutions condemning the reasonable actions Israel takes to defend its

security. Meanwhile the world's worst human rights abusers in Syria, Iran, and North Korea received far fewer condemnations.

This cannot continue.

It is in this context that the events of December 23 were so damaging. Last month's passage of UN Resolution 2334 was a terrible mistake, making a peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians harder to achieve. The mistake was compounded by the location in which it took place, in light of the UN's long history of anti-Israel bias.

I was the first governor in America to sign legislation combatting the anti-Israel Boycott, Divest, and Sanction, or "BDS" movement. I will not go to New York and abstain when the UN seeks to create an international environment that encourages boycotts of Israel. In fact, I pledge to you this: I will never abstain when the United Nations takes any action that comes in direct conflict with the interests and values of the United States.

In the matter of human rights, Mr. Chairman, whether it's the love of my family's and America's immigrant heritage, or the removal of a painful symbol of an oppressive past in South Carolina, I have a clear understanding that it is not acceptable to stay silent when our values are challenged. I will be a strong voice for American principles and American interests, even if that is not what other UN representatives want to hear. The time has come for American strength once again.

There are other elements of accountability as well.

As governor, the South Carolina constitution required me to report annually to the people of my state on how their security and prosperity were being advanced by their government. In fact, I gave that State of the State address just one week ago. I was able to tell the citizens of South Carolina that we now invest more dollars in public education than ever before, that our reserves have doubled while our debt service has been cut in half, and that more South Carolinians are working today than at any point in our state's history.

Without fundamental changes at the UN, I cannot envision making the same kind of report to the American people as their Ambassador. We contribute 22 percent of the UN's budget, far more than any other country. We are a generous nation. But we must ask ourselves what good is being accomplished by this disproportionate contribution. Are we getting what we pay for?

To your credit, the Congress has already begun to explore ways the United States can use its leverage to make the United Nations a better investment for the American people. I applaud your efforts, and I look forward to working with you to bring seriously

needed change to the UN. If I'm confirmed, I will need you, and I hope to have your support.

In short, Mr. Chairman, my goal for the United Nations will be to create an international body that better serves the interests of the American people.

After the passage of the infamous UN resolution equating Zionism with racism in 1975, U.S. Ambassador Daniel Patrick Moynihan came to the unsettling realization that, as he put it, "if there were no General Assembly, this could never have happened." Today, over forty years later, more and more Americans are becoming convinced by actions like the passage of Resolution 2334 that the United Nations does more harm than good. The American people see the UN's mistreatment of Israel, its failure to prevent the North Korean nuclear threat, its waste and corruption, and they are fed up.

My job – our job – is to reform the UN in ways that rebuild the confidence of the American people. We must build an international institution that honors America's commitment to freedom, democracy, and human rights.

I hope this can be done. I believe it is possible. And I know that if you confirm me, I will do all I can to see that it happens.

Some say we live in cynical and distrustful times. But I believe we all carry in our hearts a bit of the idealism that animated the creation of the United Nations. I know I do.

With your blessing, I will represent our great country in this international forum. I will do it in ways that I hope bring honor to our country, our values, and our national interests.

Thank you very much.