

20 December 2002

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Conclusion of the Main Part of the 57th Session of the United
Nations General Assembly**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This afternoon we have concluded our work for the main part of the 57th session of the General Assembly. I am pleased that we were able to wrap up a few days before Christmas Day and I hope this signals improved efficiency of our work, partially through better usage of time allocated for our deliberations.

Allow me now to share with you a few words to reflect on some important events and processes of the past three months and outline some of the work ahead of us for the months to come.

Without doubt, one of the most important issues of this autumn session was the discussion on the strengthening of the United Nations system. In the draft resolution that has just been adopted, we provide our guidance and directions on how to proceed further with the reform process. Many of the proposed actions will strengthen the impact of the work of the Organization, especially in economic and social fields, through a revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 that will better reflect the Organization's new priorities, through rationalization of the work of the Organization and its information services, streamlining management, clarification of the roles and responsibilities in technical assistance and many other measures that will make the United Nations more focused, efficient and effective. The adoption of the resolution has been a significant achievement; it represents an important stepping-stone for the future work and deliberations in the continuous process of reforming the Organization.

The discussion on the follow-up to the Millennium Summit reaffirmed our commitment to the implementation of objectives and goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. Despite uneven progress achieved in the implementation, I am hopeful that we will be able to jointly address the gaps in the implementation and progress further to attain the goals. The resolution adopted last Monday, outlines the way the review of the implementation and follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit would be structured in the years to come. A high-level plenary meeting on the comprehensive review of the Millennium Declaration is being proposed to take place during the 60th session of the General Assembly, five years after adoption of the Millennium Declaration. The review of the implementation of the development goals contained in the Millennium Declaration, should be considered within the framework of the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

Special attention throughout the session was paid to the most urgent issues of developing countries, particularly those in Africa. Successful outcome of the high-level meeting on New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in September, and deliberation on many issues related to the African continent, such as the causes of conflict and promotion of peace and sustainable development, the fight against malaria, and so on, contributed to greater awareness of Member States and the international community on these issues.

We have also devoted significant amount of time to the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS pandemic. The resolution just adopted calls for a high-level plenary meeting during the 58th Session of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted at the 26th Special Session. In this respect, I would like to emphasize the importance of the participation of civil society, including those representing and working for people with HIV/AIDS and the private sector, in this process.

In the coming months, I also promise to build on the endeavours of my predecessors in their efforts to make the work of the General Assembly more efficient and the meetings more interesting. I hope that a step in this direction was the organization of the open-ended panel "Afghanistan One Year Later". This panel offered valuable insights and grasped the issue in such a manner that enhanced the subsequent debate of the General Assembly on the situation in Afghanistan. I believe that informal and interactive debates such as this one, have a potential to invigorate the discussion at the General Assembly on various topics.

As I mentioned previously on several occasions, I am determined to continue the process of revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. There is still much room for improvements in its work. Our immediate task is to adopt the basic elements for determining the duration and opening date of the General Debate. I plan to convene informal consultations on this topic in January.

Beginning from January, I will chair two important working groups. The open-ended ad hoc working group of the General Assembly on the integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, as decided in the resolution adopted today, will focus on concrete recommendations with the view to contribute to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals. I intend to hold a number of informal consultations and brainstorming meetings, and on the basis of these, to suggest a work program of the Working Group for its consideration and adoption. As for the open-ended working group on Security Council reform, it will enter tenth year of its existence. Although no major breakthrough is expected, I hope that given the importance of this issue, the deliberations of the working group would produce at least an agreement on some basic principles.

The prevention of armed conflict is another topic to which this General Assembly will devote its attention. I have held preliminary consultations with a number of interested delegations which have helped me to understand the positions and concerns of Member States, and to decide on the best method to move ahead. I have appointed an extended group of facilitators that will also be

instrumental in the drafting of the resolution. I intend to launch the drafting process under my chairmanship in mid-January with a view to finish the negotiations in April, at the latest, and then to adopt a consensus resolution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I would like to use this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all of the delegates and acknowledgement of their valuable and important participation in the meetings of the Plenary and the Main Committees. I want to extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and Deputy Secretary-General, Madam Louise Fréchette, for their dedication and contribution to the successful work of the Organization. I would like to warmly thank the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for assisting me in presiding over the meetings, and in guiding the work of the Plenary. I also had excellent working relations with the Chairpersons of the Main Committees whose input to our common achievements has been essential.

I would like to extend special thanks to the representatives of the Secretariat, especially the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, under the able leadership of Under-Secretary-General Mr. Chen Jian, who have been always helpful and supportive in the fulfilment of my duties. Invaluable support and guidance was provided to my Office and myself by the General Assembly and ECOSOC Affairs Division, in particular Ms. Catherine Boivin. Last but not least, I would like to pay tribute to all of those whose contribution enabled us to successfully arrive to the end of the Main Session, especially interpreters, conference room services and security officers.

I hope that our deliberations in the New Year will be advancing in the same constructive and efficient manner as we experienced during the main part of the 57th Session of the General Assembly and I look forward to working with you in the Renewed Session.

At the very end allow me to wish you a peaceful and joyful holiday season.