

27 January 2003

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Organizational meeting of the General Assembly open ended
Ad Hoc Working Group on the Integrated and Coordinated
Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of Major UN
Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields**

It is a pleasure to open this first meeting of the open ended ad hoc Working Group on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits. Many eyes are turned towards us and expectations are high. I am glad that we are starting our work early and I seek your cooperation in making this exercise a success.

This working group meets at a critical juncture in the work of the United Nations. It comes at the moment when we are gearing ourselves to make real the promises of the UN conferences since the nineties. Our challenge is to concentrate and intensify our efforts, energize our commitments and help improve the lives of poor people everywhere.

Over the past decade, numerous UN conferences and summits resulted in clarifying and setting the development goals. International community has fully agreed on development agenda and means of its implementation. It is now time to engage ourselves in search for the most effective mechanism for monitoring and review of the progress achieved in implementing the goals of the Millennium Declaration and other conferences. We have to do our utmost in supporting the coordinated implementation at the country level and ensuring that the development goals are achieved in a due time. Let me reiterate, in this context, that credibility of the United Nations is based not only on its ability to articulate political goals but also, and primarily, on its ability to mobilize political will for their implementation.

The challenge before us, however, goes well beyond ensuring a well-coordinated approach. We also will need to look at how we can carry forward, in our work at the UN, the new approaches and spirit that permeated the major UN conferences. How can the meetings of our General Assembly and ECOSOC engage policy makers and a wealth of actors and institutions, as the conferences did? How can we bring to them the energy and dynamism that will capture international attention, that would build the political will and momentum for action? How can they continue to approach trade, finance and development together, as the Monterrey Conference did? How can the UN carry forward the commitments, partnerships and alliances that emerged at the recent conferences? How can our policy development work have greater impact on the implementation of development goals?

In that sense, our work should help to give shape to the future work of the UN in development. Drawing from the experience of the conferences, it has to be a UN which is clear and focused,

which draws on best talent, which encourages unified efforts, which promotes the cross-fertilization of ideas, which works to engage policy makers and development practitioners, which brings together the deep reservoirs of good will and energy, wherever they exist among governments, in multilateral institutions, in civil society and the private sector, to the cause of development.

I do not expect our working group to come up with a brand new architecture or a broad philosophical approach on how we complete the tasks ahead. The Assembly has asked our working group to produce "concrete recommendations" to ensure an integrated and coordinated follow-up to UN conferences and summits. We have to aim to produce simple and practical recommendations that will make our work in the UN more relevant and ensure it affects conference implementation.

I believe that it would be important, if we could agree, from the outset, on a few specific areas where we think we can make progress. Let me mention a few:

- First, we need to build on the two track approach to conference follow-up - how to build an integrated and coordinated response to conferences, paying attention to the common themes, goals and commitments that have emerged, and at the same time, how to preserve the specificity, the core issues and constituency of each conference, so that these two tracks reinforce each other. The follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, the outcomes of the Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences will also need to be taken into account in this overall approach.
- Second, we have to seek ways as to how to better organize the work of the General Assembly plenary and of its second and third committees. For instance, the Assembly should be able to address in a more focused and coherent way, challenges such as globalization and poverty eradication, which cut across the economic and social areas. Likewise, we need to look at finance, trade and other issues addressed in Monterrey, and to the various components of sustainable development, in a more holistic way. I hope that our work will help us agree on a streamlined agenda for the 2nd and 3rd committees and the plenary. This will also support the on-going efforts to consolidate reports.
- Third, it is important that we define more clearly the respective roles of the General Assembly, ECOSOC and its functional commissions in the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits. We already have an idea of what such sharing of tasks should be. The Assembly should provide overall policy guidance and reviews of progress made towards the MDGs and other conference goals at high political level. ECOSOC promotes coherence and consistency within the UN system and among its subsidiary machinery. The Council is also a crucial link between the intergovernmental policy guidance and the work of funds and programmes. Its commissions have a crucial contribution on the core issues of conferences. For instance, in the follow-up to Monterrey, a number of areas need to be clarified, such as how the meetings of the Council best complement those of the General Assembly. Another area for our deliberation is to determine how the General Assembly can best serve its role as the chief intergovernmental body for conference follow-up.

- Fourth, we must find ways to ensure that our work at the intergovernmental level supports the implementation of conference goals and commitments. How can our policy guidance support implementation in the countries? How can it, in turn, be enriched by experience from the field? How can the implementation be better monitored, reported and reviewed? How can our intergovernmental bodies most effectively dialogue with the UN organizations and guide their work? How can we continue to engage and guide partnerships?

- Finally, we need to define modalities and arrangements for reviews of conferences, not on the basis of automaticity but with a clear vision for producing more efficient policy response to new challenges and advancing the overall development agenda.

I sincerely believe that if we are able to achieve concrete advances on these few fronts, we will have made a significant beginning in a process.

It is imperative that we complete our work by the end of May. This way, we will not overlap with the preparations for the ECOSOC session and meet the deadline of 27 June set by the General Assembly for submitting the report of the working group.

Today, we are here to elect the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. I understand that you have informally agreed to entrust Ambassador Effah-Apenteg of Ghana and Ambassador Jean de Ruyt of Belgium with these responsibilities. I am confident that they will lead us to important advances for the UN.

We should also start reflecting on the workprogramme of the working group. I have circulated a tentative list of issues that could be addressed. It has been, in large part, derived from General Assembly resolution 57/270 and the structure of GA resolution 50/227. The Secretariat has also blocked a number of dates, from which you will be able to choose for the sessions of the working group. I would suggest that you devote next week to informal consultations to discuss the workprogramme of the working group. Setting out this road map will help plan better and allow us to use the limited time at our disposal in the most efficient way.

I wish you full success in this important exercise and assure you of my personal commitment to these objectives.