

23 December 2003

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Julian Robert Hunte,  
President of the 58th Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Conclusion of the Main Part of the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the General  
Assembly**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Colleagues:

It is now my pleasure to speak the words that I am confident we all want to hear - we have concluded our work for the first part of the Fifty-eighth Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Given the challenges we faced at the beginning and throughout the session, what we have been able to achieve together, and the ambitious agenda we have set ourselves for the remainder of the session, I believe that it is safe to say that this session thus far been nothing short of extraordinary.

We started this session with a most dynamic and substantive General Debate. The overall policy direction given by the record number of Heads of State and Government and other high-level participants in the General Debate underpinned and stimulated the work of the Main Committees and subsidiary bodies. Therefore, we were better prepared to address the myriad critical issues on our agenda, including HIV/AIDS, Financing for Development, humanitarian assistance, an enhanced role for the General Committee, and the revitalisation of the General Assembly itself.

I was personally very optimistic at the beginning of this session that we were ready to move decisively to advance the process of revitalising the General Assembly. I was ever conscious of the impact a revitalised General Assembly could have on the United Nations status in the global community. I am pleased that my reading of the readiness of Member States to move in this direction was right, and that we have begun, with the adoption of a consensus resolution, a process for strengthening and revitalising our General Assembly.

On all of the issues it addressed thus far in the session, the General Assembly has put its shoulders to the wheel to accomplish the tasks at hand. We all know that it was not easy, and in fact at times, it was exceptionally difficult. But each of our steps forward spoke volumes about our determination to reach accommodation, even when the challenges seemed intractable. I believe we have thus earned the right to be highly satisfied with our accomplishments.

I am, in particular, deeply appreciative of the support you have all given in completing our work, and the support you have given to me personally. In so doing, you have lightened my significant task. What we have accomplished redounds to the benefit of the General Assembly, of the United Nations and consequently, to the various national constituencies that make up our global community.

I want especially to express my heartfelt thanks - to Permanent Representatives, delegates, Chairs and members of regional and interest groups and facilitators for the tremendous cooperation and support you have given me during this first part of the session. I look forward to your continued cooperation and support in the remaining period of the session.

The support of the Secretariat is integral to our collective effort to accomplish the goals and objectives of the General Assembly. I am especially indebted to the Undersecretary General and officers of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, who have spared no effort in assisting me and my Cabinet in every aspect of our work.

The forthcoming period will be a demanding one, filled with challenge and great opportunity. We have laid out a very demanding agenda for what remains of our session. On revitalization alone, our consensus resolution commits us to take up four key issues: scheduling of future General Assembly sessions, including the work of the Main Committees and subsidiary and related bodies; rationalization of the Assembly's Agenda; biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items; and rationalization of the working methods of the Main Committees. And, as you are all well aware, revitalization is but one of the myriad issues to which we must turn our attention. Others, including the planning and preparations for the "major event of 2005" will also have to be taken up with the greatest of resolve.

I have some good news. It is that we resume in January 2004. Technically speaking, that is next year and we have all earned the right to rest, relaxation and recreation in the interim. I also have some not so good news - January 2004 is a mere nine days away. I do hope, notwithstanding, that we will all be back in January, energised and in fact, revitalised, ready to contribute to the fullest to the implementation of the courses of action to which we have agreed.

On that note, may I say that I wish all of you and your families a wonderful holiday season, and a successful and very happy New Year. I am now pleased to declare this part of the Fifty-eighth Session of the General Assembly closed, and to invite you to let the celebrations begin!

I thank you.