

30 September 2004

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jean Ping,
President of the 59th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Conclusion of the End of the General Debate of the 59th Session
of the General Assembly**

Mr Secretary General,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the past two weeks, the leaders of our respective nations have expressed their views on the major issues of concern to our world. As I now draw our preliminary conclusions, many of these speakers have already gone home to their countries. However, their statements and their policies still continue to resonate here. I was particularly struck by the forcefulness of the ideas expressed, and have no doubt that they will continue to inspire and guide our deliberations. I appreciated in particular the show of solidarity for collectively tackling the threats and challenges facing mankind.

I had an opportunity, on the sidelines of our debate, to speak with a large number of high-level representatives and leaders of Member States. Those talks reaffirmed the will of our leaders to strengthen the role and authority of the General Assembly and their dedication to multilateralism, which forms the basis for the goals and objectives pursued by the United Nations.

It is clear that we will need to do even more to root our action in the spirit of the Charter to provide it with strength and legitimacy. Here, the Secretary-General's call to advance the rule of law and strengthen the role of the United Nations - which, in the words of the Millennium Declaration, remains "the indispensable common house of the entire human family" (A/59/PV.3, p. 2) - should be a further source of inspiration throughout the present session.

Of the 191 States Member of the United Nations, 190 of them, plus two observers, took the floor during the general debate. Among the Member States, 81 were represented by their respective heads of State or Government.

Of the 190 statements made by Member States, 121 took up the question of the reform of the United Nations, emphasizing both the progress made and the road that lies ahead. A considerable number of those statements in fact contained specific proposals urging us to continue improving the functioning and the effectiveness of our Organization.

A great majority of the world's leaders specifically underscored reform of the United Nations system, particularly reform of the Security Council, revitalization of the General Assembly and progress towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Our leaders all

indicated their interest in the report we are awaiting from the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, appointed by the Secretary-General to consider threats to international peace and security and collective measures that can contribute to overcoming them.

Of all these issues, reform of the Security Council prompted the greatest number of comments and statements. Indeed, 140 Member States spoke of that issue. A majority indicated a preference for enlargement of both categories of members - permanent and non-permanent. Others wished to see solely an enlargement of the non-permanent membership. Still others would be prepared to accept a reform of the Security Council whatever option was decided on. Because of the importance that our leaders attach to Security Council reform, I shall devote particular attention to the efforts we still need to make to achieve consensus on that issue.

The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly was also a subject of great concern for most Member States, which welcomed the progress achieved during the fifty-eighth session. They emphasized the need, however, to implement the recommendations already adopted and to pursue the process. In that context, I shall be working in close cooperation with the other members of the Bureau.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to announce that this very afternoon, the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and I will be meeting to strengthen cooperation, coordination and the complementarity of the programmes of work of those three principal organs, in accordance with the responsibilities allocated them by the Charter and under our previous resolutions on the revitalization of our work. In the same spirit, it is my intention to hold similar meetings during the next few months, and I am counting on the cooperation and the continued readiness of my counterparts from the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Concerning the Goals defined in the Millennium Declaration, Member States deplored the slow progress in implementing the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and evinced considerable interest in the 2005 summit. I call for cooperation from the Assembly to ensure proper preparation for that summit. Allow me to take this opportunity once again to urgently appeal to all Member States, individually and collectively, to redouble our efforts in order to fill the gaps in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The worst mistake would be a failure to act.

So too, the debate revealed the need to deal with the situation of the least developed countries, of landlocked countries and of small island developing States, regarding their economic, social and climatic vulnerability. Many representatives advocated the formulation of more equitable policies to promote the economic growth of the developing countries and to better integrate them into the global economy. Particular stress was placed on the situation of Africa and on the need to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Concerned by the deterioration of the environment, the Assembly drew attention to the need to take appropriate corrective measures and underscored the importance of ratifying the Kyoto Protocol.

Our leaders also stressed the need to strengthen international peace and security, in particular by fighting the phenomenon of terrorism, strengthening means for preventing and combating the resurgence of crises and armed conflicts, and controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Virtually all speakers expressed their concern about the situation in Iraq and asked the United Nations to assist, to the best of its ability, the people of Iraq in rebuilding their country.

Member States continue to believe that the road map sets out the only route to follow to stabilize the situation in the Middle East. The meeting of the Quartet held on 22 September alongside the general debate will, I hope, provide new impetus to the peace process.

The situation in Africa, particularly the conflicts in Darfur and in the Great Lakes region, was of particular concern.

The guidelines that have been laid down by our leaders sketch out the framework in which the work of the present session will be taking place. As I have already indicated, the present session will be key in that it will have the great responsibility of preparing for the major events that will mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization next year. I know that I can count on the cooperation and support of members so that together we will be able to conclude the work of the present session successfully.