

23 December 2004

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

We have come to the end of the first phase of our work, a very busy but a productive period, when the General Assembly considered many agenda items. In particular, 279 resolutions were adopted, 208 of them by consensus. Before suspending the proceedings at this stage, let me just make a few brief observations on the progress achieved and on our work ahead.

Among all the items that we took up, three major items characterize this first phase: continuing the process of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly; publication of the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565); and preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, to be held in September 2005. On 17 December, by consensus, we adopted resolution 59/145, on the organizational modalities for that event. Those three items exemplify our general thinking on reform, indeed, our thinking on the Organization's capacity to adapt to the challenges of our time.

During the general debate, our leaders reaffirmed, *inter alia*, the need to reform the United Nations system. That augurs well, because the present reform process, if it is to succeed, must be supported by genuine political will. In fact, as the report of the High-level Panel has emphasized, and I concur, our institutions "will still only be as strong as the energy, resources and attention devoted to them by Member States and their leaders" (A/59/565, report, part four, synopsis).

With respect to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, I welcome the progress that has been made. In addition to what we did during the fifty-eighth session, we have also made some tremendous efforts, in terms both of content and of the rationalization of our programme of work.

We have undertaken implementation of resolutions 58/126 and 58/316, concerning the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. The role of the General Committee grew during the first part of the fifty-ninth session. There were informal meetings to consider working methods, the revitalization of the Assembly and the preparation of the high-level plenary meeting to be held in 2005. Other informal meetings were held on the New Partnership for Africa's Development, on children and armed conflict and on humanitarian assistance.

In conformity with those two resolutions, the Main Commissions got down to rationalizing their programmes of work and their agendas. How could we fail to appreciate all the progress made towards restoring the authority and the central role of the General Assembly as a universal institution? Contrary to the common, but false, image of an impotent General Assembly, the work of women and men on a daily basis shows that the General Assembly is a dynamic institution

indeed. Its decisions, while less spectacular, have for more than half a century fashioned the international order and will continue to transform our respective nations.

A major element of the success of the revitalization process is the shared conviction of all Member States of the indispensable nature of the General Assembly. The Assembly remains the sole legitimate framework where all the nations of the world can express their aspirations. It makes a strong contribution to remoulding the face of the United Nations, giving it a little more radiance and credibility - even though it is true that much remains to be done for us to live up to all our noble responsibilities under the Charter. In order to pursue the revitalization of the Assembly, I am counting on the support and assistance of all. As members know, I have appointed five facilitators who will be coordinating our collective efforts: the Permanent Representatives of Costa Rica, the Czech Republic, Kenya, Singapore and Sweden. I have no doubt that they will be up to the task, and I urge members to support them.

The report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change is also a major contribution towards the objective of adapting the United Nations to the realities of the twenty-first century. Once again, I must congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who took the welcome initiative to write a report containing courageous proposals. Our consultations on the report, to be held in January, should enable us to provide appropriate responses to the great concerns of the day. We will also have to explore the recommendations of the Millennium Project report, under the guidance of Mr. Jeffrey Sachs, whose publication is scheduled for 17 January 2005. As I indicated in the road map that I submitted to members yesterday, Wednesday, 22 December 2004, the release of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report, which is expected in March 2005, will be the starting point for substantive consultations with an eye to the high-level plenary meeting in September 2005.

If we want to ensure genuine collective security; if we want to eradicate poverty; if we want to put an end to deadly pandemics, particularly HIV/AIDS and malaria; if we want to eradicate war, transnational crime, famine and environmental degradation - in short, if we truly want to build a model society for future generations, we must go beyond statements of principle and do our utmost to live up to our commitments, particularly in the social and economic fields. When we return in January 2005, we must therefore redouble our fervour to work to find concrete and appropriate solutions to the problems facing the United Nations.

We must advance the ongoing reform process in this crucial period in the Organization's history. In that regard, we must also make every effort to follow the road map so that we can prepare for the high-level plenary meeting to the best of our ability. By working together to prepare well for that very important September 2005 meeting, we will greatly help to bring about the changes so much needed by the Organization. We will thus provide the means to better meet the legitimate expectations of the world's peoples for more peace, justice, freedom and solidarity.

Before concluding, I should like once again to take this opportunity to congratulate all delegations on their valuable contributions to the formulation and adoption by consensus of resolution 59/145, which enables us to plan now for the events of 2005 with a greater sense of calm. I should also like once again to sincerely thank the members of the Secretariat, particularly

Mr. Jian Chen, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, and his Department for the inestimable support that they have consistently given me since I took office.

Finally, I wish everyone all the best and a pleasant vacation.