



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

22 December 2006

Excellency,

We have come to the end of the main part of the sixty-first session of General Assembly and completed an important part of the work plan we set for ourselves.

Since my letter of 1 December 2006, we have made further progress on our common agenda. We have had important debates on Security Council reform and General Assembly revitalization. The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance have been adopted. The plenary has met eighty three times; the General Committee five times; we have held four meetings of the 10th Emergency Special Session; twenty informal consultations; and, adopted two hundred and twenty five resolutions.

During this important and busy transition phase for the Organisation, on 14 December, the General Assembly was able to finalise the appointment of the Secretary-General Designate, Ban Ki-Moon. We were also able to pay tribute to the successful tenure of the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan and to bid him farewell.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate Member States for renewing their commitment to multilateralism and the values and principles of the United Nations Charter. I would also like to thank the Chairpersons of the Main Committees for the leadership that they have shown to enable us to conclude our busy schedule in an efficient and timely manner. I wish also to extend my sincere appreciation to all Vice-Presidents and the Bureaus of the six Main Committees for supporting the work of the General Assembly.

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

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On 9 November, I presided over an informal meeting of the General Assembly, where the Co-Chairs of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations **System-wide Coherence** briefed Member States on their recommendations. The Report has been released as an official document (A/61/583) and Secretary General has now formally presented me with the report. For further details on System-wide Coherence please refer to my letter of 21 December.

During the debate on **Security Council reform** on 11 December, I listened closely to the views and suggestions on the way forward outlined by Member States. I am encouraged by the constructive spirit that prevailed during the debate. I believe there is clearly a growing desire for establishing a credible process that will enable us to consider this important outstanding reform agenda item, in all its aspects, in order to achieve a meaningful outcome.

In the New Year, building on the wish of the membership to address this important matter in a fresh and creative manner, I shall communicate a list of issues that could enable us to have a structured and productive discussion. I believe that adopting a thematic approach, through an open and inclusive process of consultations will more effectively allow us to tackle the various aspects of this issue in a timely fashion, including in the framework of the Open Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform, as mandated by the General Assembly. In this context, I intend to convene the first meeting of the Open Ended Working Group by the end of January 2007. Furthermore, I shall appoint a number of colleagues who will assist in carrying out these consultations.

We also had a successful debate on the **Revitalization of the General Assembly** on 12 December. Many delegations noted that the General Assembly should become more focused on strategic issues and more action-oriented so that its work would have greater visibility. Early next year, I will conduct consultations on the preferred format for taking the issue forward in order to achieve a concrete outcome during this session.

At the preparatory meeting on **Environmental Governance**, the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Berruga of Mexico and Ambassador Maurer of Switzerland, briefed Member States. They outlined the process to develop recommendations to enable the United Nations system to have a more effective impact on environmental issues. The first meeting will be held on 18 January 2007.

On **Secretariat and Management Reform**, the Fifth Committee has successfully concluded resolutions to move forward Human Resources Management and Procurement reforms. The Fifth Committee will begin further consideration of Governance and Oversight issues in March 2007, following advice from the ACABQ.

We have successfully adopted a new **Scale of Assessment** for the apportionment of the expenses of the Organisation for the period 2007–2009. In addition, work on the renovation of the United Nations Headquarters in New York will soon commence with the adoption of the resolution on the **Capital Master Plan**.

Pursuant to the decision of the General Assembly, the exercise on **Mandate Review** has now been extended until the end of the 61st Session. This will allow us to continue our work to update the work program of the Organization for the benefit of all its Member States. I wish once again to thank the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Akram of Pakistan and Ambassador Cooney of Ireland, for their leadership in this process. From January 2007, Ambassador Iftekhar Chowdhury of Bangladesh will replace Ambassador Akram.

I circulated a matrix to all member States and observer missions on the implementation of the **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, on 13 December. I hope this information will pave the way for greater cooperation and prompt the full implementation of the Strategy. On the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, I would once again encourage all delegations to find consensus on outstanding issues before the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee scheduled for February 2007.

On 13 December, the General Assembly adopted by consensus the landmark **Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities**, and made another important step towards ensuring human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. I would like to thank Ambassador Don MacKay, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, and the other members of the Committee for their hard work. The participation of the many NGOs and persons with disabilities throughout the process was greatly appreciated.

The **International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance** was adopted on 20 December. This is a major step forward. The adoption of the Convention sends a positive signal that the Human Rights Council can have a positive impact on people

worldwide. I would encourage Member States, at the earliest opportunity, to take all necessary steps to ensure its full ratification and implementation.

By adopting these important international legal instruments, the General Assembly is reasserting its role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law. It is in this context, that I would again like to urge Member States to continue consultations on the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** to complete this important matter as quickly as possible within this session.

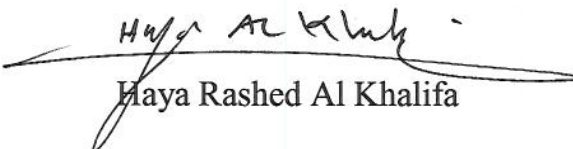
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As I informed you in my letters of 1 December and 21 December, I intend to organize an informal thematic debate on **gender equality and the empowerment of women**. This will take place in early March. I will revert to you shortly with further details of this event. I would once again like to thank all Member States for their support to ensure a successful outcome at the first informal thematic debate on 'Partnerships to achieve the MDGs'.

On 21 November, the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the United Nations Foundation co-hosted a **Forum on General Assembly and Non-Governmental Organization Relations**. I would like to express my appreciation for the high level of interest and participation of Member States. I look forward to your continued collaboration towards enhancing dialogue and cooperation between Member States and non-governmental organizations.

We have many important matters of common concern that require our close attention when we return. I hope that we can begin by working even more closely together, in the spirit of cooperation, mutual trust and collective responsibility. May I thank you and your delegation for all your support and hard work and wish you a very happy holiday.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.


Haya Rashed Al Khalifa