

18 September 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,  
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Opening of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session**

Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Friends,

It is my privilege and honor to welcome all of you to the 62nd session of the General Assembly. I would like to thank you all for your contributions towards the workprogram for this session. You have asked me to show leadership and I will do it.

Before outlining the major priorities for this session, I would first like to congratulate Her Excellency President Al Khalifa for her energetic and honest leadership during the 61st session. I would particularly like to commend her for the thematic debates she convened. I intend to develop this practice and widen our global outreach.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his close support during the transition period. Together we will continue to work with common purpose to renew, modernise and strengthen this organisation so it can rise to the challenges of the 21st century.

More than ever before, global challenges demand multilateral solutions. The United Nations is the appropriate multilateral forum to take action. This is why the revitalization of this General Assembly deserves our highest attention. To revitalize this House is also to renew our faith in each other, our common values and destiny.

True revitalization will only happen if together we address, amongst others, the five priority issues that, in consultation with you, I have identified: climate change; financing for development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals; countering terrorism; and the reform agenda – to renewing the management, effectiveness and coherence of this organisation.

Excellences,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le premier des cinq axes de travail majeurs auxquels cette Assemblée se consacrera sera dédié aux changements climatiques. Les défis climatiques sont d'une telle ampleur, et ses conséquences, d'une telle violence et d'une telle diversité que nous ne pouvons plus nous permettre d'attendre. La science a parlé ; le temps de l'action est venu. Vos chefs d'Etat auront l'opportunité de montrer leur engagement le 24 septembre prochain, ici même. Car les Nations-

Unies doivent être le lieu principal du débat et de l'action : seule une enceinte globale peut répondre à un problème global.

La Convention Cadre sur les Changements Climatiques est à cet égard la clé de voûte de notre action, les autres initiatives en cours doivent venir la compléter. Et je souhaite que l'Assemblée Générale contribue très largement au débat en renforçant la volonté et la cohésion politiques.

Mais le changement climatique n'est pas seulement un problème environnemental : à lui seul, il illustre parfaitement la très grande interconnexion entre les problèmes d'environnement et de développement. Le développement sera durable, ou il ne sera pas. Il nécessite à la fois une large participation de tous les acteurs – et notamment les ONG et les entreprises, et une meilleure gouvernance internationale de l'environnement. Ceci m'amène au second pilier que je souhaite aborder en priorité au cours de cette 62ème session : le développement.

Le temps joue contre nous. Les Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement ne seront, pour la plupart pas atteints, en Afrique notamment. Nous sommes face à une situation d'urgence. Donnons-nous les moyens d'y répondre.

Excellencies,

Financing for development is a priority. I will convene an informal meeting of the plenary on the 20th September to discuss innovative approaches and preparations for the High-level Dialogue. I also appeal for your ongoing support as we move on to Doha, in 2008.

During the 62nd session, it is also imperative that we comprehensively review progress on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Achieving the MDGs is not solely a test of our ability to deliver on our promises: it is above all a test of our moral obligations, and the values that are enshrined in the Charter.

That is why, in consultation with the Secretary-General, I intend to work closely with your Heads of State and government to hold an MDGs Leaders Meeting, here at the United Nations, during this session.

Because global action is urgently needed, the High-level Events on Children and HIV/AIDS, and progress to strengthen this organization's 'gender equality' architecture will assume additional significance.

The General Assembly must take the initiative and strengthen its central position in the multilateral system. We must use every opportunity to spread our message. We must forge a lasting consensus - a global alliance for action - by bringing together Member States, the private sector, NGOs and civil society.

In doing so, we can also help to overcome the underlying misunderstanding between cultures and religions that is at the core of many of today's problems. In this context, the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural understanding provides an additional opportunity.

We can further support these objectives and promote human security, by strengthening the Peacebuilding Commission and making progress on the Disarmament agenda.

By promoting peace, human rights and the rule of law we can make the world a fairer, more equitable place. Progress on these issues, and on development, will reduce instability and the threat of terrorism. This is a win – win situation for us all.

Reviewing the implementation of the Counter Terrorism Strategy is also a priority in this session. We need to ensure that as an organization, and within our national jurisdictions, that we are properly prepared.

I also, call on you all, to make substantive progress on the Convention, and send a strong signal that we stand united in confronting terrorism.

Excellencies,

If we want the United Nations to play its full role, we will have to do more and do it more effectively - both operationally at the country-level, and management at Headquarters. We also need the courage to move to a new stage leading to concrete results on Security Council reform.

Together, we have to strengthen this organisation's capabilities further.

As H.E. President Al Khalifa recognised, we are confronted with widening 'gaps' in our ability to deliver on important issues. Issues that are not only vital to the future relevance of the organization; but, also the the global public that we serve.

Modernising our management, and implementing greater coherence across the system will enable this organisation to deliver better results on all the priorities I have outlined.

To achieve this, we all have a responsibility to seek out bold compromises. We must strive to build a system of international relations based on multilateral cooperation, mutual respect and international law.

We can only achieve this through open and transparent working practices. This is the only way, I know, to build lasting political consensus.

Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

May I thank you once again for the responsibility and trust that you have placed in me. I can assure you that I stand ready to serve the values and principles of this organisation.

As we take our first steps together in this session, I would like to leave you to consider the wise words of George Bernard Shaw; “I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can’t find them, make them.”

In the coming months, I will count on your wholehearted support, to create the circumstances we need, as together, we chart the course this organisation must take to build bridges towards a better future.

May I thank you very much for your attention.