

25 September 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the 62nd General Debate**

Secretary-General,
Heads of States and government,
Excellencies,
Friends,

There are over 180 languages spoken in the five boroughs of New York. This cosmopolitan city really is a microcosm of the world. What better place then, to bring together, at the highest-level, all 192 Member States of the United Nations.

We are here to debate the urgent challenges, that collectively and individually, our peoples and nations face. This is one of the rare occasions each year when so many Heads of State and government gather together in one place. What a unique opportunity. This historic chamber is indeed the parliament of the peoples of the world.

It is therefore my sincere honour and pleasure, to welcome you all to the General Debate. The theme for this year's debate is 'Responding to climate change'. I would also like you to use this opportunity to draw your attention to the other key priorities we will work on together in the 62nd session.

As I set out in more detail at the opening of this session, in consultation with you, I identified five priority topics that we need to address during this session;

- climate change;
- financing for development;
- the Millennium Development Goals;
- countering terrorism, and
- renewing the management, effectiveness and coherence of this organization, including Security Council reform.

I believe that these five priorities represent an equilibrium of interests that all Member States can identify with, and take forward successfully together.

Climate change and its dramatic effects are increasingly visible and increasingly violent. The irony is that those least responsible for it will suffer most. Yesterday, many of you reaffirmed this, and sent a strong political message that the time for action had come.

That is why I have proposed creating a comprehensive roadmap to guide the way forward for the UN system and its Member States. First we need to take stock - to outline the instruments we have and structures necessary to address climate change; then a clear vision of the way forward; and, finally a strategy to get us there together.

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

And to make swift progress, I call on you all today, to renew your support for the Secretary-General in his endeavour to advance the agenda of the United Nations and to make it more effective.

Together, dealing systematically with substance, the General Assembly can demonstrate its global leadership on these important issues. To revitalize this House is also to renew our faith in each other, and this organization's cherished values.

Excellencies,

The basic values, norms and principles of international relations world are undergoing a profound transition. These are characterized by great opportunities, as well as great challenges.

The life patterns of individuals and communities are increasingly shaped by global economic forces.

Overall, our wealth is increasing. More and more people are benefiting from the expansion of trade, commerce and new jobs – in a system based on the rule of law and human rights.

But for the benefits of development to be sustained they have to be shared by all.

Sharp social divisions and inequalities continue to persist. About half the world's people still live on less than US\$2 per day.

In a world where we are confronted by images of prosperity, the burden of expectation for a better future is growing daily.

Education - the key to empowerment – is for some more accessible; yet each day 100 million young children don't receive an education.

Let us not spare any effort to move the world towards a sense of genuine belonging, shared opportunity and responsibility.

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 convictions.

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

Excellences,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

A l'heure de la mondialisation, d'autres défis se posent à nous. Les flux de capitaux deviennent de plus en plus complexes, volatils et opaques.

Nous sommes de plus en plus vulnérables face aux nouvelles menaces auxquelles nous devons répondre. Le terrorisme, le trafic d'armes, les armes de destruction massive; autant que les pandémies et les conséquences des changements climatiques n'en sont que quelques exemples.

C'est pourquoi je vous appelle à utiliser toutes les opportunités qui nous sont offertes au cours de cette session pour progresser vers une paix durable en notamment au Moyen- Orient, en Irak, en Afghanistan et au Darfour.

Nous devons nous mettre en mesure de répondre à ces défis. Face à l'accélération du monde, les processus décisionnels politiques peuvent nous paraître très lents et trop lourds.

Comme le disait Madame la Présidente Al Khalifa lors de la précédente Assemblée générale, nous sommes confrontés à un écart grandissant entre les actions à entreprendre et les moyens multilatéraux qui sont à notre disposition pour ce faire.

Excellencies,

By confronting the challenges of our times,
nurturing new patterns of cooperation,
we can forge a new culture of international relations,
demonstrate the courage to rise above ourselves,
and achieve our common goals.

We must act with purpose, determination and vision: all of us accepting our shared, but differentiated responsibilities to work together for change.

If fully implemented, the commitments made at the 2005 World Summit, and at other summits and conferences, can create the conditions for lasting prosperity and stability, based on the principles of peace and security, international development, human rights and the rule of law.

Excellencies,

To demonstrate this, achieve more during this session, and in the future, the General Assembly, should be more;

- of a dialogue, not a monologue;
- more engaging and insightful;
- be more focused on results; and,
- continually strive to exemplify this spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

There is an old saying, "Keep your mind level, if the mind is level, the whole world will be level."

It is my hope that this spirit should guide us in our joint efforts, not only during this session, but in the future. Acting in this manner requires us to realize that all the distinctions of the world are caused by the discriminatory views of the mind.

Excellencies, thank you very much for your attention.