

3 October 2007

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

Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have concluded the annual General Debate.

I thank you all for your insightful contributions. The presence of almost hundred Heads of State and Government as well as about 80 Ministers for Foreign Affairs is a mark of the importance the world places on this unique Assembly.

Beyond the General Debate, there has been a flurry of diplomatic activity, including many High-level Events convened by the Secretary-General. We have increased our visibility; and, the public and media have responded positively.

I am grateful that you directly addressed the five priority topics that I set out, and pointed the way forward. I am also grateful to those leaders who spared the time to discuss these priorities with me in more detail.

With this mandate, I intend to work closely with all of you to achieve the results that your Heads of Delegation have called for.

Excellencies,

The latest reports about the accelerated melting of the Arctic have unnerved the experts. We need to be on high alert!

Responding to the challenge of climate change you have send a strong political message that the time for talk has passed - that the time for action has begun.

I believe an important shift has taken place. Climate change has become the flagship issue of the 62nd session.

There was overwhelming consensus that while adapting to global warming we must not set limits to growth, but rather help achieve sustainable development.

We all agreed that we have common but differentiated responsibilities. And rightly, there was broad consensus that the United Nations must remain at the centre of the process to reach a global agreement – including, to strengthen International Environmental Governance.

Many of you also presented commendable initiatives: to reduce deforestation and emissions; invest in flood-prevention and food-security; introduce tougher energy efficiency standards; mobilize private sector investment in clean technologies; improve carbon-trading mechanisms; and, accelerate technology and resources transfers.

The idea of a roadmap to coordinate the United Nations system on climate change, and to complement national efforts was endorsed by many.

Given the urgency of the many calls for action, it is now up to you to deliver in Bali.

Excellencies,

Overwhelming support to make quicker progress on the Millennium Development Goals was expressed by leaders from all regions. Many of the Goals are off-track, but in sub-Saharan Africa we may not achieve a single Goal by 2015. This is indeed an emergency situation.

Many developing countries set out domestic initiatives and new international partnerships to boost economic growth; to empower women and children; to provide better access to drugs to treat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

But many of you also recognized that a gap remains between promises and delivery on aid, trade and domestic reforms. Achieving the MDGs requires a global partnership with everyone fulfilling their part of the compact.

I am therefore grateful, that many of you supported convening an MDG Leaders Meeting this session. We must demonstrate by our actions that we can and will achieve the Goals.

It was also evident that many delegations want to see further progress on Financing for Development as we move towards the Doha Conference in 2008.

Many also pointed out the significance that concluding a global deal on trade would have on reducing poverty. We must press ahead during the existing round as many agree the current system is not sustainable.

Excellencies,

Terrorism in all forms was strongly condemned. There was strong support to ensure full implementation of the Counter Terrorism Strategy and a broad desire for swift progress on the Convention. In this context, many also emphasized the need to overcome ignorance and prejudice through a sustained dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

On the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights many of you reaffirmed the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights for all. While some addressed the shortcomings of the Human Rights Council, others also called for its strengthening in order to live up to its full potential.

In this context reference was also made to the importance to adherence to international law, human security and the responsibility to protect, all of these being complementary to sustainable development and peace and security.

A wide range of issues of peace and security were raised. In some areas we have taken some small, but concrete, steps in ongoing efforts to towards sustainable political solutions in the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Darfur. Also, concerns were expressed about recent events in Myanmar.

Positive developments were also reported in a number of post-conflict countries. In this regard, some delegations noted the positive contribution that UN peacekeepers had made, while others stressed the need to strengthen the capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission.

There were also calls for better progress on disarmament, including, concluding an Arms Trade Treaty, and, that non-proliferation needed to be advanced.

The idea of fairer migration policies was mentioned. And some raised the growing links between organized crime, human trafficking and drugs.

Excellencies,

There is overall agreement that we could make faster progress on all these issues, if our multilateral institutions better reflected contemporary realities: underlining the need for better progress on United Nations reform.

The Secretariat must be more effective, efficient, and accountable to Member States – some of you put forward initiatives to achieve this. And, resources across the UN system must be mobilized and delivered more coherently on the ground.

We heard from those countries engaged in and supporting the ‘One UN’ approach that they are already seeing better results; and, others who support strengthening the gender architecture.

There was wide-ranging support for concrete results on Security Council reform, including through intergovernmental negotiations.

Excellencies,

The General Assembly is the only forum where we can tackle many of these issues comprehensively.

It is therefore incumbent upon us to revitalize this House by taking the necessary decisions on the priorities challenges that have been outlined.

At the opening of the General Debate, I suggested we could better achieve this if the General Assembly was more interactive. I am grateful that you delivered.

Let us continue in this spirit tomorrow at the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Peace, and throughout the 62nd session.

Thank you very much for your attention.