

9 November 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Informal Briefing for NGOs on the Work of the General
Assembly**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends,

I am very pleased to meet with you this morning. As we are now well into the main part of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly, it is timely that we update on our work and exchange ideas that can be useful as we move forward. Since the beginning of my tenure, I have identified a series of issues, on which I believe progress can be achieved over the course of this session. These include Climate Change, the Millennium Development Goals, Financing for Development, Counter-Terrorism and Management Reform.

I was particularly encouraged by the political consensus among Heads of State, both during the General Debate and during the Secretary-General's High-level Event to develop a global response to climate change. To build on this momentum and the discussions that will be held in Bali, I intend to hold a High-level thematic debate in February 2008, to consider how best the United Nations system, working with the private sector and civil society, can collectively strengthen its contribution to address the challenges that climate change presents.

I was also encouraged by the renewed commitment to accelerate progress to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We have reached the mid-point to achieve the Goals by 2015 and many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, remain off-track. In order to accelerate progress, I intend to hold a High-level thematic debate during this session to review the progress to achieve the Goals, recommit efforts and resources to attain them, and build consensus for urgent action.

Financing for Development is essential to achieving the MDGs. The High-level Dialogue on 23 and 24 October was an important input to the preparatory process of the Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development in Doha in 2008. The Facilitators, H.E. Ambassador Abdelaziz, Permanent Representative of Egypt, and H.E. Ambassador Lovald, Permanent Representative of Norway, will continue to work to finalize a procedural resolution setting out the modalities for Doha. I would like to acknowledge the hearings of civil society on the eve of the High-level Dialogue, as well as the input of civil society and the private sector during the Dialogue, which contributed substantively to the discussions. In the spirit of Monterrey, I look forward to the continued involvement of civil society in the run-up to the Review Conference and at the Conference itself.

On 4 December, I intend to convene an informal meeting of the General Assembly to discuss ongoing activities being undertaken by Member States and the United Nations system to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and in spring 2008, I plan to hold a thematic debate on Management Reform, to assess what we have accomplished so far and what remains to be done.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the 62nd Session, we should ensure that existing General Assembly reform processes are advancing on the right track and that outstanding reform commitments are moving forward. We should bear in mind that our common goal is to strengthen the United Nations so that it can better deliver its programmes and mandates for the benefit of all. In this regard, I have encouraged Member States to build on the discussions and progress achieved during the 61st Session, in the area of System-wide Coherence, including Gender Architecture, Security Council Reform, International Environmental Governance and Mandate Review.

In all of these processes, it is vital that we maintain a people-centered approach.

As the UN's partners in Civil Society, you are instrumental in connecting constituencies at the grassroots worldwide with the multilateral decision-making processes of the United Nations. Your perspectives are diverse and your experience and expertise enrich the UN. I am committed to fostering a continuous dialogue with you throughout the 62nd Session, as I believe strongly that only by combining our resources will we be able to address the pressing issues at hand.

Let me give you another example. The day before yesterday I addressed the Third meeting of the Friends for Human Security. I told them that it is of utmost importance that the promotion of the human security agenda is a collaborative effort. We need to bring together Member States, international organizations, UN agencies, civil society organizations and NGO's, as well as, maintain a close relationship with established partners such as the Advisory Board on Human Security and the Human Security Network.

I was encouraged by the great interest and attendance of Member States at the interactive hearing with civil society which was held during the High-level Dialogue of the General Assembly on Interreligious and Intercultural Cooperation for Peace on 4 October. This was a positive signal of the common realization that innovative approaches and partnerships are indispensable to tackle the new forms of challenges that have emerged along with technological advances and globalization.

As preparations are currently underway for the Commemorative High-level Plenary Meeting on Children, to be held on 11 and 12 December, and for the 2008 High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, both of which are events that will entail significant participation of civil society, let us keep the momentum of our dynamic collaboration alive, so that we can ensure that these events help to enhance our common endeavors.

I am particularly pleased to be joined today by the distinguished Chairpersons of the Main Committees of the General Assembly who will brief you on the work of their respective Committees. I consider their participation in today's briefing as an important contribution to our on-going efforts to revitalize the General Assembly and I look forward to the interactive discussion.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that today's realities demand that we think outside the box and that we set our aspirations ever higher. As we approach the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we are reminded that the foundation of values such as: freedom, equality, solidarity, human security, respect for nature, and shared responsibility, has long been in existence. I am convinced that it is after all worthwhile to embark upon a journey for a new culture of international relations based on these values. I cannot imagine the architecture of the new culture of international relations without human security, human rights, responsibility to protect and sustainable development. It is up to us, as individuals, to recommit to these values now, and to apply them in all aspects of our work and our lives.

Thank you.