

26 November 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
on Agenda Item 121 “Revitalization of the Work of the General
Assembly”**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Today we will consider a subject of great importance to us all – the agenda item on ‘Revitalization of the General Assembly’.

Under this title, our efforts to impart new vigor into this great institution have been ongoing for over 16 years.

We now need to ask ourselves what our ultimate objective is.

How can we enhance the authority and efficiency of this Assembly?

Our leaders have called for a stronger United Nations. Could we not instead call this exercise ‘the role of the General Assembly in strengthening the United Nations system’?

The 2005 Outcome Document reaffirmed our central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It also recognized our role in setting standards and the codifying international law.

We should strive to live up to this mandate in our everyday work.

Excellencies,

To promote more effective multilateralism, to find global solutions to global problems, it is incumbent upon all of us to bolster the authority and international standing of this Assembly.

At the opening of the General Debate two months ago, I suggested the General Assembly should be:

1. more of a dialogue, not a monologue;
2. more focused on substantive results;
3. more engaging and insightful; and,
4. exemplify this through greater cooperation and mutual respect.

I would like to thank all Member States for delivering through your active contribution and proposals.

Member States are the driving force of our success and I encourage you to take the initiative. It is first and foremost by systematically tackling the challenges that we face together and achieving results, that the General Assembly makes itself stronger, more effective and more relevant to the lives of the global public.

In this regard, I would like to thank Kyrgyzstan for bringing forward a resolution on social justice, which has been co-sponsored by over 80 Member States; also, the cooperative way that the Czech Republic and Dominican Republic approached elections to the Security Council.

I would like to call on all Member States to continue to work together in this manner - enthusiastically and in cooperation – as we have also done on mandate Review, so that we can make progress on other important issues such as climate change, the MDGs, Security Council and Management reform.

This means that on System-wide Coherence for example, the practical success of the ‘pilot’ countries at the country level should sway the opinion of the Assembly in New York, rather than the other way around.

To give all Member States the opportunity to demonstrate our renewed leadership on priority issues, I shall convene debates on counter-terrorism in December, on climate change in February 2008, and on management reform in April, among others.

Excellencies,

As the Charter stipulates, the relationship between the General Assembly and other principal organs must be complementary – not competitive.

We must continue to develop our relationships in an open, transparent and cooperative manner to strengthen the Organization and better accomplish our common goals.

In this regard, I maintain regular contact with the Secretary-General on substantive issues and supported his request to brief the Assembly on recent developments. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his support and cooperation.

I have also met periodically with the Presidents of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and with the Chairs of the Main Committees to enhance cooperation and spread best practices; promoted the Assembly’s interaction with civil society and the private sector, and, our cooperation with parliaments, particularly through the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Our outreach with these and other important constituencies, including the media, must continue to be developed. Our message must be consistent, compelling and relevant to everyday life, and we must resist giving the perception of institutional introspection.

Excellencies,

The effectiveness of the President, and his or her Office, has an important impact on the quality and organization of the General Assembly's work. This is not only contingent on his or her political and diplomatic skills, but also on the support and cooperation of Member States and the Secretariat.

Commensurate with the role envisaged of the President in the Charter, the President's budget, including their Office, should be financed entirely from the regular budget, rather than the makeshift arrangements that currently exist.

In addition, and in proportion to the growing responsibilities of the President, the Office of the President should be appropriately staffed and properly situated within the UN Headquarters.

This would ensure each elected President has an equal opportunity to deliver results - whether from a developed or developing country, no matter how large or small. An entirely UN funded budget would enhance the independence of the President, and increase transparency and accountability to Member States.

Excellencies,

In resolution 61/292, Member States decided;

“to establish, at its sixty-second session, an ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the General Assembly, open to all Member States, to evaluate and assess the status of implementation of relevant resolutions, to identify ways to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, inter alia, by building on previous resolutions, and to submit a report thereon to the Assembly.”

I believe that it is particularly important that the working group focus on ensuring that existing resolutions are fully implemented.

It could also consider other practical steps to improve our working methods, such as, finalizing a repository of best practices for the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, and periodically updating the Rules of Procedure to include recent decisions taken by this Assembly.

The working group will begin to consider these and other issues shortly. Today, I am very pleased to announce that H.E. Ambassador Towpik, Permanent Representative of Poland, and H.E. Ambassador Loizaga, Permanent Representative of Paraguay have agreed to act as co-Chairs of the working group.

I would like to ask all Member States to extend your fullest cooperation and support to the co-Chairs and invite you to bring forward constructive proposals and practical suggestions.

Thank you.