

11 December 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Commemorative High-Level Plenary Meeting devoted to the
Follow-up to the Outcome of the Special Session on Children**

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
and children from across the world,

May I welcome you all to this High-Level Commemorative Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Special Session on Children.

I was a delegate at the Special Session on children in 2002. When I returned this year as President of the General Assembly I began the session by screening a video-message from the children of my country.

There is nothing more important than the future of our children and young people. They are the next generation of leaders.

Excellencies,

It gives me great confidence in this organisation, when we continue to tackle issues that cut to the core of what we stand for: when we evaluate how well we have done, once Declarations and Plan of Actions are adopted, and delegates return to their capitals.

We have a responsibility to set an example, to stand up for what we believe in – to ensure that we pass on to them a better world – a safer, cleaner and more equal world.

Climate change draws these strands together.

If we don't address this growing threat, instability will increase and the environment will deteriorate. The world's poor will be left struggling to build a better life for themselves and their children.

Together we can and must do better by our children by making the world a better place not only today but in future.

This is a unique and continuous commitment. It means thinking ahead and at the same time acting now.

This captures the essence of United Nations global mission.

Excellencies,

We are already committed to these goals.

At the 1990 World Summit for Children our leader endorsed the principle that children should have a “first call” on resources in bad times as well as good.

Again, in 2000, they committed to achieving specific targets by 2015 on children’s education and health as part of the Millennium Development Goals.

And in May 2002, at the General Assembly’s Special Session on Children, governments promised to create a World Fit for Children as a bridge to a World Fit for all of us.

The General Assembly also devoted considerable attention to reviewing progress made in eliminating violence against children at its 61st and 62nd sessions.

Excellencies,

2007 is a milestone for the world’s children. It marks a rite of passage for the Convention on the Rights of the Child – its 18th anniversary.

Today and tomorrow, we have an opportunity to celebrate the important progress that has been made. But we also have a responsibility to achieve the goals we set for ourselves.

The Secretary-General’s report offers a mixture of hope and concern about the situation of children around the world.

I would like to that all Member States – over 120 so far – that have submitted national reports on their progress towards the goals of the Special Session.

These reports provide an assessment of the situation of children in each country, as well as future commitments to overcome the challenges that remain.

I would also like to commend the many regional bodies, civil society and private sector organisations - in particular, UNICEF and other UN agencies - that have implemented initiatives to make the World Fit for Children.

Excellencies,

Unless the investment in children is made, humanity's most fundamental long-term problems will remain unresolved.

If we are serious about our collective promises then we have a great responsibility to deliver on them for our children.

As every parent knows, the worst crime is to mislead your child. Empty promises lead to empty souls.

I am optimistic that this plenary session, the round tables, and the many side events will deepen our intergenerational dialogue; and, further our commitment to make the world a better place for all our children.

Thank you.