

13 February 2008

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the Thematic Debate in the General Assembly
“Addressing Climate Change: The United Nations and the World at
Work”**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I am very grateful to Member States for powerfully articulating a clear message that climate change must remain one of the top priorities of the General Assembly during this session.

The number of delegations that have spoken, 115 in total, is a testament to the importance of taking immediate practical action to address climate change.

Over the last three days we have heard some compelling reasons why the United Nations should promote integrated partnerships and approaches with all interested stakeholders, in particular the private sector and local authorities, to successfully overcome the threat that climate change presents to our way of life.

But this does not mean that as individuals, we should feel disempowered by the scale of the challenge. Small contributions add up. Many of our speakers made the case that we can all make a difference through simple changes to our daily behaviour.

Member States also made clear that fostering innovation, developing and transferring new technologies, leveraging green investment and changing our economic future can only happen with the private sector firmly on board.

The challenge for us now is to implement policies globally that can create low-carbon economies which promote sustainable economic growth and provide incentives for individuals to change behaviour.

Member States, regional and multilateral organisations, must therefore develop stronger, more mutually supportive partnerships with the private sector. The United Nations, through the Global Compact, already has a head start to promote more ethical global corporate leadership.

It is clear that when billionaire businessmen like Sir Richard Branson and Mayor Michael Bloomberg are willing to throw their weight behind the United Nations General Assembly that the private sector and local government take this issue extremely seriously. And, more importantly that they recognise the contribution that we can make.

By bringing in business creativity and innovation we have a real opportunity to create a virtuous cycle whereby Member States - providing market incentives and a clear enabling framework for the private sector - bolster confidence in green investment over the long-term.

Excellencies,

Increasingly, many developed countries are demonstrating their willingness to provide fresh finance and to enhance the critical roles played by international financial institutions and the private sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In this context, the importance of accelerating technology transfers to developing countries and securing sufficient financing for adaptation and mitigation cannot be underestimated.

The United Nations system has a significant role to play to facilitate these goals and Member States own initiatives on climate change. Member States also recognise that the United Nations is best placed to provide an integrated response to the complementary challenges of addressing climate change and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The system also has an important role in raising awareness globally, generating broad based support and providing cooperation to ensure the full implementation of existing and future agreements under the UNFCCC.

To support this process it is extremely important that Member States work speedily and cooperatively to agree on the principles of a strategic policy framework to steer the United Nations systems activities on climate change.

Excellencies,

Finally, I would like to thank all Member States for their insightful contribution to this thematic debate, 'Addressing Climate Change: the United Nations and the world at work'.

We have heard various comments on the Secretary-Generals report. There appears to be a general understanding however that further work is necessary.

Given the sense of urgency expressed by many, I propose that in due course the Secretary-General provides the General Assembly with a more detailed briefing on efforts to strengthen and coordinate the United Nations activities on climate change.

Furthermore, and in order to give continuous consideration to climate change within the General Assembly, I intend to convene two meetings so that we have the opportunity to consider specific aspects of the climate issue in more detail. One will focus on the needs and concerns of vulnerable countries and the other one on corporate responsibility and sustainability

Thank you.