

2 September 2008

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Seventh Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the
Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the
Membership of the Security Council and other Matters related to the
Security Council**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

General Assembly Decision 61/561 requested the Open-ended Working Group to submit a report to the General Assembly, including any agreed recommendations, before the end of the 62nd session. Since our last meeting of the OEWG, I have called on Member States to cooperate in order to adopt agreed recommendations. In the meantime, I have extensively consulted on the Draft Recommendations that we have before us today.

At the outset, I want to remind us all of the overall work of the OEWG during this session and in particular last year's agreed Decision 61/561.

From the very beginning we aimed at reaching a general agreement on a joint platform for Security Council reform. For that reason I invited you to bring forward the negotiables for intergovernmental negotiations.

In order to advance our work, I also proposed seven principles that you have supported and accepted. Individual delegations, but also regional and interest groups responded with written contributions, that I circulated, reflecting their views on various elements of negotiables as well as views on the process and way forward.

Following our deliberations in April, I asked the Task Force to engage in consultations with all Member States in order to assess the current situation and identify options on how to move forward. The Task Force submitted its Report to me on 9 June 2008 and the Working Group discussed it on 17 June.

And where are we now?

The result of our deliberations was that Member States were not willing to give up their initial positions prior to the start of intergovernmental negotiations. While recognizing the differences in the position of Member States, we can only agree that all positions and proposals form a basis for intergovernmental negotiations. Therefore, in this context the only agreement we have in order to move forward is to respect that.

I also believe, we all agree what the key issues are: categories of membership, the question of veto, regional representation, size of an enlarged Council, working methods of the Security Council and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

Hence, the Draft Recommendations in front of you reflect in paragraph (d) all positions and proposals of Member States; the five key issues, as well as the Reports of the Open-ended Working Group of the last and this year, including the seven principles I proposed.

There is obviously no other way and acceptable alternatives for Member States in identifying modalities of the process.

This is why I believe that we should now move to a next stage by launching intergovernmental negotiations.

Excellencies,

Given the complexity and sensitivity of the issue, there is also a need to stress that while commencing intergovernmental negotiations, we must aim at seeking a solution that can garner the widest possible political acceptance by the membership.

The negotiation process must be open, inclusive and transparent, to be conducted in good faith and with mutual respect. These are the so called parameters and if you allow me, at the same time, the confidence building measures that are essential for the success and conduct of intergovernmental negotiations.

This is reflected in paragraph (e) of the Draft Recommendations.

Provided we are really interested to make progress and to achieve agreement on Security Council reform without dividing the membership we need to seek a viable solution. At the same time – and this was made clear during the intensive consultations with Member States – such a solution can only be the result of negotiations.

Therefore, I would like to stress that in order to reach a solution that can garner widest possible agreement for the reform of the Security Council Member States have to negotiate in the spirit of good faith and mutual trust. Only the negotiation process itself will define the optimal solution. The only alternative to negotiations is no reform.

It is in this context that I would like to remind you that the Resolutions and Decisions adopted so far should be regarded as our guidance as well as assets.

We have to respect them while moving forward. But they should not be used as an obstacle to advance the process of reform, rather, we have to build upon them.

I strongly believe that it is essential that we all agree and move to the next stage and advance on the question of Security Council reform. Therefore, I call on all of you to support the Draft Recommendations.

Finally, the Draft Report and Recommendations that I propose is the result of a lengthy process of consultations and negotiations with you. It reflects the various positions of Member States on the issue, the work we have done throughout the 62nd session and Decision 61/561 of the 61 Session.

At this juncture of the Security Council reform I am asking you to follow the only path which will take us forward by accepting the proposed Report of the OEWG including the Recommendations. It is up to you to decide whether you are ready and willing to take this next, bold step.

The floor is yours.

I Thank You for your attention.