



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

16 May 2016

Excellency,

Enclosed for your kind attention is a letter, dated 16 May, 2016 from the co-chairs of the Ad hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Vladimir Drobnyak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, and H.E. Wilfried I. Emvula, Permanent Representative of Namibia, convening a meeting at which the attached draft resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly will be presented. This meeting will take place at 10:00 a.m on Monday, 23 May 2016 in Conference Room 4.

I take this opportunity to encourage the active support, participation and contribution of Member States to this important process.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives
And Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

16 May 2016

Excellency,

We are addressing you in our capacity as Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (AHWG) and wish to thank all delegations for their active participation in the meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Group held in the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

In the next stage of our work, we will engage in informal consultations on the draft resolution on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which is to be adopted as part of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group by the end of the seventieth session. In this regard, and after consulting with the President of the General Assembly, we have the pleasure to enclose herewith the draft resolution based on discussions we had in the previous meetings.

The presentation of the draft resolution will be held on **Monday, 23 May 2016**, in Conference Room 4, GA Building.

Delegations are welcome to send their comments and/or proposals on this draft resolution until **25 May 2016** to the following e-mail address: msimunic@mvep.hr.

We are looking forward to your active participation in discussions on the proposed draft resolution.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Vladimir Drobnjak
Ambassador and Permanent
Representative of Croatia

Linda Anne Scott
Chargé d'affaires a.i
of Namibia

To: All Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations, New York

70/. Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 69/321 of 11 September 2015 and all other previous resolutions relating to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly;¹

Mindful of the milestone achievements in the course of the year 2015, in particular the adoption of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement on climate change;

Underlining the need to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly;

Reiterating that the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a critical component of the overall reform of the United Nations;

Recognizing the role of the General Assembly in addressing issues of peace and security, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and *acknowledging* its role and authority, established in Article 10 of the Charter, to make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both, on questions or matters within the scope of the Charter, except as provided in Article 12;

Reaffirming the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, as well as the role of the Assembly in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law;

Recognizing the ongoing intergovernmental efforts within the United Nations to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women, and *convinced* of the need to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men in their access to senior positions of decision making, including to the post of Secretary-General, bearing in mind the need to select the best candidates;

Reaffirming also the role and authority of the General Assembly in global matters of concern to the international community, including in global governance, as set out in the Charter of the United Nations;

Welcoming the efforts of the President of the General Assembly to reinvigorate the revitalization of the work of the Assembly during its seventieth session;

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly and the updated inventory of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization annexed thereto;²

2. *Takes note* with appreciation of a multilingual web page devoted to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, accessible directly from the

¹ Resolutions 46/77, 47/233, 48/264, 51/241, 52/163, 55/14, 55/285, 56/509, 57/300, 57/301, 58/126, 58/316, 59/313, 60/286, 61/292, 62/276, 63/309, 64/301, 65/315, 66/294, 67/297, and 68/307.

²

United Nations website, which exists in all six official languages, and *invites* the Secretariat to continue updating regularly and equally that web page and its substantive content in a cost-effective manner;

3. *Decides* to establish, at its seventy-first session, an ad hoc working group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, open to all Member States:

(a) To identify further ways to enhance the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, inter alia, by building on the progress achieved in past sessions as well as on previous resolutions, including evaluating the status of their implementation;

(b) To submit a report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-first session;

4. *Also decides* that the Ad Hoc Working Group shall continue its review of the inventory of General Assembly resolutions on revitalization annexed to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group submitted at the seventieth session, and, as a result, continue to update the inventory to be attached to the report to be submitted at the seventy-first session of the Assembly;

5. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General,³ and requests the Secretary-General to submit an update on the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions on revitalization addressed to the Secretariat for implementation that have not been implemented, with an indication of the constraints and reasons behind any lack of implementation, for further consideration by the Ad Hoc Working Group at the seventy-first session;

Role and authority of the General Assembly

6. *Reaffirms* the role and authority of the General Assembly, including on questions relating to international peace and security, in accordance with Articles 10 to 14 and 35 of the Charter of the United Nations, where appropriate, using the procedures set forth in rules 7 to 10 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, which enable swift and urgent action by the Assembly, bearing in mind that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter;

7. *Recognizes* that implementation of General Assembly resolutions, including those related to the revitalization of its work, enhances the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of the Assembly, and *underlines* the important role and responsibility of Member States in their full implementation;

8. *Reaffirms* that the relationship between the principal organs of the United Nations is mutually reinforcing and complementary, in accordance with and with full respect for their respective functions, authority, powers and competencies as enshrined in the Charter, as demonstrated through the joint activity of the Presidents of the Security Council and General Assembly in the process of the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General during the seventieth session, and in this regard *stresses* the importance of further ensuring increased cooperation, coordination and the exchange of information among the Presidents of the principal organs and also with the Secretariat of the United Nations, in particular the Secretary-General;

³ A/70/681.

9. *Welcomes* with appreciation the continued practice of holding periodic informal briefings by the Secretary-General on his priorities, travels and most recent activities, including his participation in international meetings and events organized outside the United Nations, and *encourages* the continuation of this practice;

10. *Welcomes* the informal meeting of the plenary during the seventieth session of the General Assembly on the ways and means of further enhancing the cooperation between the Permanent Missions and the UN Secretariat were considered, as well as the letter from the President of the General Assembly dated 23 March 2016, transmitting the summary of the meeting;

11. *Reaffirms* the importance and benefit of continuing interaction between the General Assembly and international or regional forums and organizations dealing with global matters of concern to the international community, as well as with civil society, where appropriate, and encourages the exploration of appropriate actions or measures, while fully respecting the intergovernmental nature of the Assembly, in conformity with its relevant rules of procedure;

12. *Recognizes* the value of holding interactive inclusive thematic debates on current issues of critical importance to the international community, and *calls upon* the President of the General Assembly to organize such debates in close consultation with the General Committee and the Member States, including with regard to the preliminary programme of such debates, in order to enable an adequate level of participation and an appropriate allocation of time for substantive interactive discussion during the debates so as to enable all interested delegations to state their positions and to facilitate, where appropriate, results-oriented and productive outcomes of such debates, and in this context *welcomes* the initiative of the President of the Assembly at the seventieth session to select „The United Nations at 70 – A New Commitment to Action“ as the theme of the general debate;

13. *Encourages* improvements of the quality of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly and continuing efforts to ensure the inclusion in the report of more substantive information on the Council's work, as appropriate;

14. *Invites* the Secretariat, including the Department of Public Information, while carrying out its activities, as mandated by the General Assembly, to continue its efforts to raise the visibility of the Assembly and to enhance world public and media awareness of the contribution made by the Assembly to the fulfilment of the goals of the Organization, as set out in the Charter;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, under relevant agenda items, to bring to the attention of the Member States constraints that have prevented the Secretary-General from implementing those provisions of General Assembly resolutions that are addressed to the Secretariat;

Working methods

16. *Reaffirms* existing relevant mandates related to the improvement of the working methods of the Main Committees, including annex C of resolution 58/316, operative paragraphs 7 to 13 of resolution 59/313, cluster III of resolution 60/286, and resolution 69/321, in particular paragraphs 16 and 17 thereof;

17. *Requests* each Main Committee to further discuss its working methods at the beginning of every session, and in this regard *invites* the Chairs of the Main Committees to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group during the seventy-first session on any best practices and lessons learned with a view to improving working methods, as appropriate;

18. *Reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General to include, in his report under the agenda item "Pattern of Conferences" at the 71st session, information regarding the basis for the current practice whereby Member States bear the additional costs of using the UN Headquarters conference services during business hours;

19. *Welcomes* the holding of elections for non-permanent members of the Security Council and members of the Economic and Social Council about six months before the elected members assume their responsibilities, as well as the current practice by the Security Council of inviting the elected Council members to observe some of its meetings and activities prior to the assumption of their responsibilities, and also *welcomes* such efforts to afford elected members appropriate opportunities to prepare for their tenure at the Security Council;

20. *Emphasizes* that the General Assembly and its Main Committees, at the seventy-first session, in consultation with Member States, should continue their consideration of and make proposals for the further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items on the agenda of the Assembly, including through the introduction of a sunset clause, with the clear consent of the sponsoring State or States, taking into account the relevant recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group;

21. *Recalls* its resolution 48/264 of 29 July 1994 adopting Guidelines on the Rationalization of the Agenda of the General Assembly;

22. *Stresses* the importance of enhancing the role of the General Committee to support the work of the General Assembly;

23. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken within the General Committee and individual Main committees aimed at avoiding duplication and overlaps, and ensuring synergies, coherence and complementarity of the General Assembly agenda, all its Committees and the ECOSOC, in particular following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and *calls* for the continuation of these activities during the seventy-first session of the Assembly;

24. *Recalls* rules 153 and 154 of the Rules of procedure of the General Assembly, and *encourages* the Main Committee Chairs and the Secretary-General to ensure observance of these rules, within their respective mandates;

25. *Reiterates* its invitation to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Chairs of the Main Committees, in consultation with the General Committee and Member States, to enhance the coordination of the scheduling of the General Assembly meetings, including high-level meetings and high-level thematic debates, in the view of optimizing their interactivity and effectiveness, especially during the general debate, and distribution of such events throughout the session;

26. *Reaffirms* in this regard resolution 57/301 of 13 March 2003, by which the General Assembly, inter alia, decided that the general debate shall open on the Tuesday following of the opening of the regular session of the General Assembly and shall be held without interruption, and *encourages* the scheduling of future high-level meetings during the first half of the year, from within existing resources, taking into account the calendar of conferences and without prejudice to the current practice of convening one high-level meeting in September at the beginning of each session of the Assembly;

27. *Takes note* of the opening dates of the seventy-first to eightieth regular sessions of the General Assembly and of the general debate, as contained in

document A/INF/70/1/Rev.1, and *requests* the Secretariat to examine the practicality of aligning the beginning of the General Assembly regular session with the beginning of the calendar year;

28. *Decides* that the list of speakers for the general debate shall be established without a distinction, in terms of speaking order, between Heads of States and Heads of Governments of the United Nations Member States;

29. *Recalls* the interim arrangement adopted in General Assembly decision 68/505 recommending the pattern for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees until the seventy-third session, *reiterates* its request that the Ad Hoc Working Group prepare long-term arrangements concerning the election of the Chairs and Rapporteurs of the Main Committees of the General Assembly with the aim of establishing a predictable, transparent and fair mechanism, in consultation with regional groups, and that it submit them to the Assembly no later than at the seventy-second session, and in this regard *reiterates* its invitation to Member States to present proposals and begin early on to give attention to the matter of concluding a future arrangement, which would come into effect at the seventy-fourth session of the Assembly, with the annex to resolution 68/307 containing the guidelines on election of Chairs and Rapporteurs of the Main Committees to be considered in this context;

30. *Encourages* Member States to seek gender balance in the distribution of Chairs of the Main Committees;

31. *Encourages* Member States to make, to the extent possible, full use of the e-services provided by the Secretariat, in order to save costs, reduce the environmental impact and improve the distribution of documents and in this regard *requests* the Secretariat to further improve, harmonize and, where appropriate, unify such e-services;

Selection and appointment of the Secretary-General and other executive heads

32. *Commends* the Presidents of the General Assembly of the seventieth session and of the Security Council for December 2015, for starting the process of soliciting candidates for the position of the Secretary-General by joint letter to all Member States, and *commends* the circulation to all Member States on an ongoing basis of the names of individuals that have been submitted for consideration as candidates for the position of the Secretary-General, which have been posted on the President's dedicated website, including the vision statements of the candidates⁴;

33. *Commends* the President of the seventieth session of the Assembly for his active contribution to the implementation of provisions guiding the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General as contained in its resolution 69/321, and in accordance with the role accorded to him by that resolution;

34. *Strongly welcomes* the organization and convening by the President of the General Assembly of informal dialogues with all candidates submitted for the position of Secretary-General, and the modalities established by him for such informal dialogues as laid out in his letters dated 25 February 2016 and 29 March

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2016⁵, which afforded Member States and civil society an opportunity to engage interactively with the candidates;

35. *Reiterates* that the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary-General differs from the process used with regard to other executive heads in the organizations of the United Nations system, given the roles of the Security Council and the General Assembly in accordance with Article 97 of the Charter, and *emphasizes* in particular that the process of selection of the Secretary-General is guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, building on the best practices and the participation of all Member States;

36. *Notes* that the selection and appointment of the next Secretary-General is expected to take place in 2016, and as a result *requests*, without prejudice to the role of the principal organs as enshrined in Article 97 of the Charter, the President of the seventy-first session of the Assembly to actively support this process in accordance with the role accorded to him by relevant resolutions, including this one;

37. *Welcomes* the presentation of a significant number of women for the position of the Secretary-General, following its invitation to Member States to do so, as contained in paragraph 38 of resolution 69/321;

38. *Stresses* in particular the need to ensure the appointment of the best possible candidate for the post of the Secretary-General who embodies the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, and who demonstrates a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, proven leadership and managerial abilities, extensive experience in international relations, and strong diplomatic, communication and multilingual skills;

39. *Reaffirms* its commitment to continue, in the Ad Hoc Working Group, in accordance with the provisions of Article 97 of the Charter, its consideration of the revitalization of the role of the General Assembly in the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General, and *recalls* all relevant resolutions, including resolutions 11(I), 46/77, 47/233, 48/264, 51/241, 52/163, 55/14, 55/285, 56/509, 57/300, 57/301, 58/126, 58/316, 59/313, 60/286, 61/292, 62/276, 63/309, 64/301, 65/315, 66/294, 67/297, 68/307 and 69/321, reaffirming the applicable procedures in the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, in particular rule 141, and acknowledging existing relevant Assembly practices;

40. *Calls* on the President of the General Assembly to monitor and review the General Assembly's implementation of these resolutions;

41. *Welcomes* the briefing provided by the Secretariat to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly on the gender balance and regional origin of the Executive Heads and Senior Management Group of the Organization;

42. *Recalls* Resolution 52/12 B, in particular operative paragraph 2 that noted that the Secretary-General will appoint the Deputy Secretary-General following consultations with Member States, and *stresses* that the process of appointment of executive heads of the Organization should be in accordance with relevant rules of procedure and as set out in the Charter;

43. *Stresses* the need to ensure equal and fair distribution based on gender and geographical balance, while meeting the highest possible requirements, on the appointment of executive heads of the Organization, and in this regard *recalls* its resolution 46/232 adopted without a vote on 2 March 1992, in particular paragraph 3(e) thereof, in which is noted that the recruitment of United Nations Secretariat staff should be on as wide a geographical basis as possible and that, as a general rule, no national of a Member State should succeed a national of that State in a senior post and there should be no monopoly on senior posts by nationals of any State of group of States;

Strengthening the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the General Assembly

44. *Commends* the President of the seventieth session of the General Assembly for strengthening the transparency and inclusivity of his office, including the increased and creative use of online facilities, and for releasing detailed information on the finances, official travel, staffing and activities of his Office;

45. *Notes with appreciation* the views expressed by the Office of the President of the General Assembly to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the strengthening of the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of the Office of the President of the Assembly and its relationship with the Secretariat⁶ and measures already undertaken in this regard, while continuing to explore additional measures where feasible, and *notes* the support provided by the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management of the Secretariat to the Office of the President of the Assembly;

46. *Takes note* of Secretary-General's Task Force report, as contained in document A/70/783;

47. *Encourages* the Presidents of the General Assembly to continue with the practice of periodically briefing Member States on their activities, including official travel;

48. *Commends* the initiative of convening a retreat on the strengthening of the General Assembly, which brings together the incoming and outgoing presidencies of each session of the Assembly, and in this regard takes note of the summary of the proceedings of the retreat held on 16 June 2015;⁷

49. *Encourages* exchanges between the President-elect of the General Assembly and the Council of Presidents so that Presidents-elect may benefit from the experiences of former Presidents in terms of best practices and lessons learned;

50. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly, with support from the Department for the General Assembly and Conference Management, to develop a standardised format for the handover report that is currently produced at the end of every Presidency;

51. *Requests* the Secretary-General to develop a dedicated record-keeping and archiving facility for the Office of the President of the General Assembly;

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⁷ A/70/666.

52. *Stresses* the need to promote and ensure gender balance throughout the United Nations system and in this regard *invites* Member States to consider presenting women as candidates for the position of the President of the General Assembly, and *encourages* Presidents-elect to continue to ensure respect for balanced gender and geographical representation in the Office of the President of the General Assembly;

53. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Ad Hoc Working Group at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly on sources of the funding and staffing of the Office of the President of the Assembly, including on any technical, logistical, protocol-related or financial questions, and for more clarification on the budgetary basis for the provision of such support by the Secretariat;

54. *Decides* that Presidents of the General Assembly shall take an oath of office, as detailed in Annex 1 to this resolution;

55. *Decides* that the President of the General Assembly shall observe a Code of Ethics, as detailed in Annex 2 to this resolution;

56. *Requests* the United Nations Ethics Office and the Department for the General Assembly and Conference Management to provide an induction briefing to all Presidents of the General Assembly and members of the Office of the President of the General Assembly prior to the assumption of their duties;

57. *Emphasizes* the need to ensure, from within agreed resources, that the Office of the President of the General Assembly is allocated dedicated Secretariat staff, with responsibility to, in an efficient and capable manner, coordinate the transition between Presidents, manage interactions between the President and the Secretary-General, and preserve institutional memory, and *emphasizes* further the desirability for staff in the Office of the President of the General Assembly to be seconded from among Member States in a timely manner;

58. *Notes* that the activities of the President of the General Assembly have increased markedly in recent years, and in this regard *invites* the Secretary-General to:

a) make the administrative changes required to ensure that the current UN programme budget professional positions in Office of the President of the General Assembly are, where appropriate, filled for a period of three years and regraded with a view to creating more balanced staffing of the Office;

b) allocate, within existing resources and, where possible, through multi-annual secondments from across the UN system, additional five posts for the Office of the President of the General Assembly at the P3 or P4 level to ensure continuity of the primary functions of the Office of the President of the General Assembly;

59. *Requests* Presidents of the General Assembly to develop written terms of reference for all Office of the President of the General Assembly personnel and for these to be standardised and archived by the Department for the General Assembly and Conference Management;

60. *Decides* that Presidents of the General Assembly shall provide financial disclosures on assumption and completion of their duties, in line with the existing United Nations financial disclosure programme;

61. *Requests* to the Secretary-General to submit, in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019, proposals to review the budget allocation to the Office of the President of the General Assembly in

accordance with existing procedures, and in this connection *looks forward* to considering such proposals during the main part of its 71st session;

62. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make programme budget resources available to Presidents of the General Assembly from their date of election;

63. *Stresses* the importance of the contributions of Member States to the Trust Fund in support of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, and in this regard *notes* with appreciation contributions that have been made to the Fund, and *encourages* Member States to continue to contribute to the Fund;

64. *Requests* the Secretary-General to eliminate the programme support costs levied on the trust fund in support of the Office of the General Assembly so as to encourage voluntary contributions to be channelled towards the trust fund to the greatest extent possible;

65. *Requests* Presidents of the General Assembly to report on the President's website on substantive activities, contributions to the Office of the President of the General Assembly Trust Fund and details of official travel undertaken during his or her Presidency and to produce an end of term report on these matters, including a financial statement;

66. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly, in cooperation with the Secretariat, to report on the implementation of all mandates accorded to him or her by this resolution to the Ad Hoc Working Group at the seventy-first session of the Assembly on the role, mandate and activities of the President.

Annex 1 – Oath of Office:

“I solemnly declare and promise to exercise in all loyalty, discretion and conscience the functions entrusted to me as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to discharge these functions and regulate my conduct with the interests of the United Nations only in view and in accordance with the Code of Ethics for the Presidency of the General Assembly, and not to seek or accept instructions in regard to the performance of my duties from any Government or other source external to the Organization”.

Annex 2 – Code of Ethics:

1. The President of the General Assembly shall at all times observe the highest standards of ethical conduct;
2. The President shall avoid any action, before, during or after his or her term of office, which might result in or create the appearance of:
 - a) The use of the office of the Presidency or resources attached thereto for private gain;
 - b) Giving unwarranted preferential treatment to any organization or person;
 - c) Impeding the work of the Organization; or
 - d) Affecting adversely the confidence of member States in the integrity of the work of the Organization.
3. The President shall avoid any situation involving a conflict between their own personal or private interest and the interests of the Presidency or United Nations;
4. The President shall ensure the greatest possible transparency in the utilization of property, premises, services, and resources made available for the discharge of

the functions of the office, and ensure that they are used only for the official business of the Presidency, and not for other purposes;

5. The President shall ensure the greatest possible transparency in any external activities, including the holding of any public or commercial office, or any commercial dealings, to protect against conflict of interest.

6. In the event that the President considers that a conflict of interest may arise, he or she shall recuse himself or herself from handling the matter and, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, appoint an Acting President in relation to that matter or meeting;

7. Any reference to the President of the General Assembly in this Code shall also include his or her agents.