

8 February 2007

**Statement of H.E. Ms. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa,
President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly,
at 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 delegates,

I would like to begin, by welcoming all delegations to the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of this session. I would also like to, commend my predecessors and the Vice-chairs of the Working Group for their determination, over more than a decade, to find a way forward on this important matter. I would also like to thank the Secretary of the Working Group for his dedication and tireless efforts.

You will recall that last year the General Assembly decided, through resolution 60/568 of 11 September 2006, that the Working Group should continue its work, taking into account the progress achieved during the forty-eighth through sixtieth session, and discussions on the process of implementing the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and in the context of paragraph 17 (e) of the Report of the Working Group.

As we resume our deliberations on Security Council reform this morning, we should also bear in mind the commitments made by our leaders at the World Summit to support early reform of the Council - as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations - in order to make it more representative, efficient and transparent, and to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions.

To further these goals, World leaders also supported efforts to adapt the working methods of the Security Council, by increasing the involvement of States who are not members of the Council.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Members States have demonstrated their interest in pursuing Security Council reform in a creative manner at the debates in the General Assembly on 11th and 12th of December 2006.

As I indicated in my letter of 24 January 2007, we could begin the process of consultations by focusing on a number of key issues. This thematic approach does not preclude any delegation from raising additional matters of significance in the context of Security Council reform.

However, I am convinced that this approach will allow us to have a more focused and productive discussion.

Against this background, I am pleased to announce the appointment of a number of Facilitators, from the five regional groups, who will assist me in carrying out the consultation process as follows:

- H. E. Mr. Ali Hachani, the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, will lead the consultations on, 'categories of membership';
- H. E. Mr. Andreas D. Mavroyiannis, the Permanent Representative of Cyprus, on, 'the question of the veto';
- H.E. Mrs. Mirjana Mladineo, the Permanent Representative of Croatia, on 'the question of regional representation';
- H. E. Mr. Heraldo Muñoz, the Permanent Representative of Chile, on, 'the size of an enlarged Security Council'; and,
- H. E. Mr. Frank Majoor, the Permanent Representative of Netherlands, on, 'the working methods of the Security Council and the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly'.

I would personally like to thank the Facilitators for accepting to perform these important responsibilities on my behalf.

I have asked them to interact with all Member States in an open, inclusive and transparent way, and I strongly encourage you to engage with them in a constructive manner during the various formats in which they will conduct their consultations. Notwithstanding the comprehensive nature of the consultation process and the relationship between the various issues, each Facilitator should lead consultations specific to the subject area that she or he is responsible for. The process of facilitation should reflect the views of the entire membership in a fair and factual manner, while underlining the areas of broad agreement within the Membership.

In due course, the Facilitators will inform you of their suggested work plans. I have asked them to report back to me on the outcome of their consultations by the end of March 2007.

At this point, we will have before us a consolidated report allowing the entire membership to have an informed follow-up discussion on the way forward.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I should underline that, as President of the 61st session of the General Assembly, I will continue to be open to the views of all Member States. These consultations are the beginning of a process.

I appeal to all of you to work together in a constructive manner, in order to ensure the integrity of this process as we strive to achieve a comprehensive Security Council reform with the broadest possible agreement.

Thank you.

I would now like to give the floor to delegations for any comments.

Statements were made by 22 Delegations after which the President closed with the following statement.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I am glad that the process that I have outlined today enjoys your full support.

I am also pleased with the constructive spirit of the meeting. I hope this will allow us to move ahead, away from the current status quo, to find a creative solution to this very important and outstanding reform issue.

I appeal to all of you to work together in a constructive manner, in order to ensure the integrity of this process as we strive to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council with the broadest possible agreement.

The Facilitators will begin the process of consultations during the week of the 19th of February, to allow all Member States enough time to reassess their views regarding each of the subject areas.

Each Facilitator will start the process of consultations with an inclusive informal meeting, to allow all Member States to express their views in a transparent manner on each of the subject areas.

My office will, in due course, inform you of the calendar of meetings.

Thank you very much for your attention.