

28 September 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting**

Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Minister Felipe Perez Roque,
Your Excellencies, Ministers and Heads of Delegation,
Colleagues and Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to be present here today to address this Ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It has become a welcome practice for the President of the General Assembly to address the Ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement at the beginning of each regular session. This practice is partly in recognition of the critically important role the Non-Aligned Movement plays in the overall work of the General Assembly.

Like the NAM, I believe in a strong General Assembly where all nations have an equal voice, and all have a shared responsibility to work constructively to promote the ideals eloquently proclaimed nearly 60 years ago in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – to promote the dignity and worth of the human person; to promote equal rights of men and women; and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

The eve of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration should inspire us to continue to work tirelessly to promote these ideals. The promotion of all human rights, good governance and the rule of law should not be mere slogans, but real goals and objectives that we collectively strive to achieve.

Excellencies,

I have outlined five main areas of focus for the 62nd Session, reflecting the issues on which urgent international action, through the General Assembly, is needed. The strong support which NAM Member States have traditionally accorded to my predecessors will be critical to making progress on these issues.

Climate Change is one of the most pressing challenges of our time that requires urgent action on a global scale. That is why I have proposed creating a comprehensive roadmap to guide the way forward for the UN system and its Member States. Climate change is also a development issue which has a significant impact on the attainment of the MDGs. Developing countries are facing

some of the most severe effects of Climate Change, yet they are least able to cope with it. This is why I welcome the political momentum created this week both in the High-level event and the General Debate by Heads of State and Government and look forward to working with all of you to make further progress on this vital issue.

I have made the Millennium Development Goals another priority for this session. Many sub-Saharan African countries are not on target to attain any of the MDGs. The mid-point for attainment of the goals by 2015 provides an excellent opportunity for Member States to review progress on implementation of the MDGs, to recommitting efforts and resources to reach the agreed targets, and to build consensus for urgent action. In consultation with the Secretary-General and Member States, I therefore intend to convene an MDGs Leaders meeting during this Session – possibly in June 2008 - with the aim of achieving those objectives. I look forward to the NAM's active support in this.

Financing for Development is a related issue which I have also identified as a priority for this session. The Monterrey Consensus provides a comprehensive approach for enabling poor or medium income countries attain the MDGs and other internationally-agreed development goals. The High-level Dialogue which will take place here in New York in late October should, together with other meetings, provide the preparatory basis for the Doha Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in 2008. I therefore appeal to you, Honourable Ministers, to attend the High-level Dialogue at the Ministerial level to demonstrate the importance we attach to this issue, and in order to generate momentum internationally for the Follow-up Conference.

The Counter Terrorism Strategy is also a priority for this session. I look forward to working with delegations to make substantive progress on implementing the Strategy. To this effect I intend to convene an informal meeting in early December in order to take stock and exchange best practices of the implementation. The united stand of the General Assembly in this regard will demonstrate the international community's solidarity in confronting terrorism.

Finally, I have also made Institutional Reform a priority for this session. With respect to Management Reform, I believe that a modernised and more transparent United Nations would serve its Member States better, and more importantly, enable us achieve more expeditiously the other priorities I have outlined.

With respect to Security Council reform, I hope that during this Session we can work together towards making the progress that so many Member States desire. To achieve this, however, we must recognise, as the Secretary General pointed earlier, that this will be a collective effort that should entail building an atmosphere of trust and confidence among States as the ideal basis for negotiations.

Excellencies,

Many of the issues that I have outlined are very dear to NAM member states because they have a direct impact of the daily lives of the people you represent. Having said that, I mean especially sustainable development. It is the imperative of our time. As your President for the 62nd Session of the General Assembly I pledge my commitment to working with you to make genuine progress on these issues. I will work in an open, transparent, constructive and collaborative manner to address these issues which are so important to us all and go to the very heart of why the United Nations was established in the first place.

I will also be counting on support, advice and encouragement of NAM member states, and I have no doubt that you will give it freely and without reservation. Together we can deliver on these key issues during this session. Let's work to do just that.

I thank you.