

14 December 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the First 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 Delegates,

I would like begin by welcoming all delegations to the first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group.

Since the beginning of the sixty-second session, and in particular after the debate in the General Assembly on November 12 to 14, I have held informal consultations with over 120 Member States in various formats. There is general support, taking into account the progress achieved so far, that we should use the current momentum to move forward.

Based on these consultations, our objective should be to move forward by identifying and reaching agreement on the various elements of the negotiables that could form the basis for intergovernmental negotiations. In this respect, we should be guided by the Report of the OEWG (A/61/47), and its Annexes, and the positions and proposals of Member States. Therefore, at this meeting, I would like to encourage all Member States to focus their statements on concretely identify these elements.

As I mentioned previously, Member States should have primary ownership and responsibility for the process of Security Council reform. I would therefore encourage Member States to remain actively engaged and committed to addressing this important issue in a results orientated manner and in the spirit of mutual co-operation and respect. In this regard, Member States should begin to conduct consultations among themselves in various settings during the following weeks.

Excellencies,

Allow me please at this point to recount the agreements that have been reached so far on Security Council reform:

- GA resolution 48/26 established the OEWG to consider all issues related to Security Council reform;
- GA resolution 53/50 determined that any resolution or decision related to Security Council reform be adopted by two-third majority;

- In the UN Millennium Declaration Heads of State and Government resolved to intensify their efforts to achieve comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects;
- At the 2005 Summit World Leaders committed to support early reform of the Council in order to make it more regionally representative, efficient and transparent, and to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy of its decisions; and, most recently,
- The reports and decisions of the OEWG, including the last report A/61/47 as well as GA Decision 61/561 adopted on 17 September.

As a result of my process of consultations, it has become evident that Member States are prepared to regard these agreements as assets which serve as the basis to move forward.

In order to achieve concrete results, I would like to emphasize the importance of the seven principles I noted in my concluding remarks on 14 November, which have been widely accepted by Member States during the subsequent consultations. Let me read them to you again:

First, we must bear in mind that Security Council Reform is an integral part of strengthening the UN. It must therefore go hand in hand with the transformation of the wider United Nations system;

Second, prudent and principle oriented guidance by the President of the General Assembly is required, though it must be based on a joint venture with Member States in good faith and mutual respect.

Third, the way forward ought to be accomplished through an objective and transparent process to first identify the negotiables in order to then move to intergovernmental negotiations.

Fourth, the Open-ended Working Group should carry out consultations on the framework and the modalities for intergovernmental negotiations;

Fifth, further steps must contain components and notions that will allow the Membership to reach a general agreement on all aspects of Security Council reform, in particular on both the composition of the Council, and its working methods;

Sixth, the reform of the Security Council must accommodate the interests and concerns of all sides, especially those who are currently underrepresented; and,

Seventh, Member States should refrain from steps which could serve to undermine the current momentum and consensus to continue a process with the intention of achieving result oriented solutions.

I consider them as indispensable in order to make progress on this important issue.

Excellencies,

On my part, I would like to inform you that H.E. Ambassador H.E. Ambassador Ismat Jahan, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, H.E. Heraldo Munoz, Permanent Representative of Chile and H.E. Joao Manuel Guerra Salgueiro, Permanent Representative of Portugal, have agreed to serve as Vice-Chairmen of the OEWG. Together with me as the Chairman of the OEWG we will form a Task Force on Security Council Reform. The role of the Task Force is to assist me in conducting the process in a transparent and inclusive manner.

The Task Force also constitutes a focal point for communication with Member States, in particular for identifying elements of the negotiables. Let me also emphasize that it will be up to Member States to identify and put forward a document to the Task Force that could serve as a basis for intergovernmental negotiations.

May I ask all Member States to extend your full cooperation and support to all the members of the Task Force on Security Council reform.

Regarding the timetable of the work, I would like to inform you that it is my intention to have focused meetings in February, April and June. However, this timetable is conditioned on progress made in our deliberations and consultations during the periods in between.

In concluding, I would like to stress again that I count very much on your support and cooperation and look forward to your proposals.

Thank you.