



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

19 July 2018

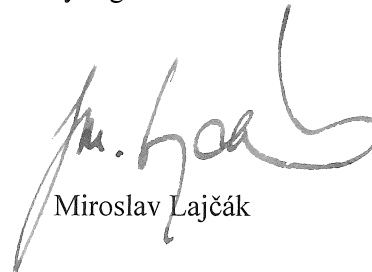
Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter, with attachments, dated 18 July 2018, from H.E. Ms. I. Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and H.E. Mr. Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium, Co-facilitators to lead intergovernmental consultations aimed at enhancing synergies and coherence and reducing overlap where it is found to exist in the agendas of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as the high-level political forum and other related forums in the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in accordance with paragraphs 28, 29 and 30 of resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017 entitled “Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly”.

Along with their letter, the co-facilitators present recommendations and a summary of key messages heard during their consultations.

I encourage Member States to give due consideration to their recommendations, within the context of the on-going consultations of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly.

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



Miroslav Lajčák

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

18 July 2018

Excellency,

In your letter dated 21 December 2017 you appointed us as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultations related to the General Assembly resolution 71/323 of 8 September 2017 entitled "Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly", in particular in its paragraphs 28, 29 and 30 related to the ongoing consultations aiming at enhancing synergies and coherence and reducing overlap where it is found to exist in the agendas of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as the high-level political forum and other related forums in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

After holding 4 informal consultations with Members States as well conveying an informal meeting between members of the 2nd, 3rd and 5th Committee of the General Assembly and the members of the bureau of Economic and Social Council, we have identified recommendations that we are attaching to this letter. While all of them do not necessarily enjoy consensus, we trust these reflect equitably the views expressed and form a broadly accepted way forward. We hope they can be useful in the ongoing negotiations on the revitalisation of the General Assembly.

We also attach a summary of the key messages heard during the four informal sessions we have organised.

We would like to express our gratitude to you and your Office as well as to the Secretariat for the support in accomplishing our mandate.

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

Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve

Permanent Representative of Belgium to the
United Nations

Rhonda King

Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent
and the Grenadines to the United Nations

TO: The President of the General Assembly
New York

**Review of alignment of agendas of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and their
subsidiary bodies and the HLPF and other related forums in light of the adoption of the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Zero draft paragraphs

The Co-facilitators have prepared draft elements to be included in the resolution on the revitalization of the GA, for the consideration of Member States. These elements are based on the informal consultations that were convened with Member States on 3 and 31 May and on 3 July. The elements also build on the work done during the 70th session of the General Assembly on the Strategic Alignment of Future Sessions of the General Assembly with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as on the work done during the 71st session of the General Assembly on alignment and enhancing synergies and coherence and reducing overlap where it was found to exist in the agendas of the GA, ECOSOC and their subsidiary bodies, as well as the HLPF and other related forums in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

Draft paragraphs for consideration:

The General Assembly,

Noting that UN intergovernmental bodies need to effectively and efficiently address the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Recognizing that there remains a need for Member States to agree on a framework to identify and address overlaps in the agendas of UN bodies and gaps, as appropriate, in their coverage of the 2030 Agenda;

Recalling the right of Member States to propose new agenda items;

Requests the President of the General Assembly, at its 73rd session, to continue the present process of consultations and notes that these consultations should focus both on:

- (i) enhancing synergies and coherence and reducing overlap, where it is found to exist, in the agendas of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, as well as the high-level political forum and other related forums, in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and
- (ii) ensuring that the United Nations intergovernmental bodies cover the various dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals and targets that are within their mandate and expertise, bearing in mind that the eradication of poverty is the overarching objective, and that some goals and targets may be addressed in other parts of the UN system;

Recommends that the President of the General Assembly convenes annual joint meetings of the Chairs and Bureaux of the Committees of the General Assembly to discuss how their work relates to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the commonalities between their work programmes as well as propose ways to simplify and harmonize reporting requirements in the future;

Requests the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Economic and Social Council to convene an annual briefing to Member States at the beginning of the General Assembly session outlining the connection and synergies between the work of the General Assembly and ECOSOC on the 2030 Agenda for that year.

Review of alignment of agendas of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and their subsidiary bodies and the HLPF and other related forums in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Co-facilitators' summary of key messages of the informal consultations

The Co-facilitators have prepared this summary of key messages emanating from the process of the review of alignment of agendas of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and their subsidiary bodies and the HLPF and other related forums in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, based on the informal consultations convened with Member States on 3, 31 May, and 31 July 2018. The co-facilitators also met informally on 20 March with the members of the Bureaus of the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Committee of the General Assembly and the members of the Bureau of ECOSOC.

The informal consultations were informed by the Report on Strategic Alignment of Future Sessions of the General Assembly with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, prepared during the 70th session of the General Assembly by the Permanent Representative of Colombia, with the support of four members of the General Committee – the Permanent Representatives of Morocco, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the Republic of Korea.

They were also informed by the final report, containing a summary of discussions and recommendations, prepared during the 71st session of the General Assembly by the Co-facilitators on alignment (Argentina and Australia) after having convened consultations aimed at enhancing synergies and coherence and reducing overlap where it was found to exist in the agendas of the GA, ECOSOC and their subsidiary bodies, as well as the HLPF and other related forums in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

The basis for the intergovernmental review of agenda alignment during the 72nd session of the General Assembly is resolution 71/323, “*Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly*”, in particular paragraphs 28, 29 and 30.¹

¹ 28. *Also recalls* the need to enhance synergies and coherence and reduce overlap where it is found to exist in the agendas of the General Assembly, especially of its Second and Third Committees, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, and the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Council and the Assembly, as well as all other related forums, in accordance with relevant rules of procedure and in the light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Erreur : Signet non défini. and calls for the continuation of such efforts during the seventy-second session of the Assembly;

29. *Requests* the General Committee, while exercising its functions under rule 40 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to pay special attention to reduction of such overlap;

30. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly at its seventy-second session to identify proposals, through consultations with all Member States and the President of the Economic and Social Council, as well as through the convening of the General Committee, aimed at addressing gaps and duplication in the agenda of the Assembly as they relate to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account the report on the strategic alignment of future sessions of the Assembly and other relevant inputs, for the consideration of Member States during the seventy-third session of the Assembly;

Key messages from the informal consultations

- The consultations were conducted with the clear desire to equip the UN intergovernmental bodies to deliver the best support possible to the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We heard Member States reiterate that the full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda is of the highest importance.
- The alignment of agendas of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and their subsidiary bodies and the HLPF and other related forums in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is important to ensure adequate strategic direction and guidance on sustainable development at the global level.
- In the view of many Member States, the alignment should lead to an effective and comprehensive coverage of the 2030 Agenda, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and targets by UN intergovernmental bodies, with the understanding that eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimension is the overarching priority. Other Member States emphasize that the exercise should help to address not only gaps but also duplications and overlap in the agendas of UN bodies.
- Regarding the identification of gaps in covering the 2030 Agenda, past experiences showed that the majority of the SDGs and their targets are covered in the GA and/or ECOSOC agendas, yet inter-governmental gaps on substantive issues remain. There is low coverage by the UN intergovernmental bodies on SDGs 6 (water and sanitation) and 12 (sustainable consumption and production). Additionally, SDGs 9 (infrastructure, industrialization and innovation), 10 (reducing inequality), 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies) have limited coverage. SDGs 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land) are covered elsewhere in the UN system.
- With this in view, some of the Member States wish to consider discussions to create new agenda items where deemed appropriate and necessary to give those goals and targets with low coverage a place to be followed-up and reviewed.
- Some Member States are of the view that all SDGs should be addressed in the GA and its Committees and ECOSOC, emphasizing that the indivisible nature of Agenda 2030 make it imperative and urgent to ensure equal attention and consideration to all goals and targets of the SDGs aiming at a successful implementation of the Agenda in its entirety. Others feel that relevant parts of the UN system intergovernmental bodies can address some of the goals and targets, rather than having comprehensive coverage by the GA and ECOSOC.
 - Some also stated that perhaps not all gaps need to be filled, and that efficiency, effectiveness, comparative advantage and the differential value of the UN need to be considered. Some delegations regretted that the amount of agenda points kept increasing, making it difficult for all delegations to engage meaningfully. It was felt important that Member States exercise self-restraint in bringing new items.
- Some of the Member States consistently underscored that duplication and overlap in the agendas of the GA, ECOSOC, HLPF and other bodies need to be addressed also with a

view to ensure the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the UN intergovernmental processes. Some felt there is an excessive number of meetings, negotiations and reports.

- Many member states were of the view that duplication and overlap should be considered on a case by case basis, and mandates of the respective bodies should always be considered. There is the feeling that, in order to assess whether duplication exists, it is important to look at the outcomes of the intergovernmental bodies on a similar item.
- Some delegations asked to explore the feasibility of discontinuing some items or pursuing joint reporting. There was also a call to review the outcomes and results of resolutions and declarations and consider what could be bi-ennialized or tri-ennialized. Other delegations were reluctant to discontinue or reduce the frequency of items.
- We heard that the General Committee can play an important role in advancing agenda alignment, and that it is currently underutilized and could be used to more effectively.
- There was a shared understanding that there remains a need for Member States to agree upon a framework to identify and address overlaps in the agendas of UN bodies and gaps in their coverage of the 2030 Agenda.
- Some Member States were of the view that a comprehensive, and substantive analysis and mapping was required for moving forward to provide sufficient information for formulating positions and making informative decisions. There is ample material in this regard, developed by the previous alignment exercises, on which we can build.
- Some Member State made proposals on how to continue the work. One proposed that a survey of Member States' views on alignment be conducted by the Secretariat to inform an SG report and subsequent work on alignment and harmonization. Many others, however, questioned how the survey would be developed and conducted, and noted that it was not a standard practice in the GA. They stressed the importance of Member States' involvement in designing such a survey should it be decided to conduct one. They also stated that more time was necessary to discuss the potential survey before arriving at consensus. Some countries also raised the issue of a potential PBI.
- Member States welcomed the proposal that the President of the General Assembly continue the alignment process during the Assembly's next session.

Conclusion of the informal consultations

- During the final informal consultations on 13 July, Member States had before them, for their consideration, Co-facilitators' zero draft paragraphs for possible inclusion in the resolution on the revitalization of the GA. These were based on the informal consultations convened with Member States on 3 and 31 May and on 3 July. The paragraphs also built on the work done during the 71st session of the GA on alignment and enhancing synergies and coherence.
- Several countries supported the transmission of the zero draft paragraphs, containing specific proposals, to the Co-Facilitators of the GA revitalization resolution.
- Many countries, however, emphasized that only consensual paragraphs should be forwarded to the GA revitalization process and that the paragraphs did not enjoy consensus.

- An overarching concern among these countries was that there is a need for Member States to agree on a framework to identify and address overlaps in the agendas of UN bodies and gaps in their coverage of the 2030 Agenda.
- In particular, there was no agreement among Member States regarding a request for the Secretary-General to conduct a survey to seek the views of Member States on what they see as critical overlaps in the agendas and what they consider to be gaps. More time was needed to discuss and consider this proposal. Some proposals also were seen as going beyond the mandate of the alignment process, and there were reservations about proposing an end date by which the process should be completed.
- In view of the lack of consensus or broad agreement on the proposals, the Co-facilitators communicated their intention, as a way forward, to share with the President of the General Assembly their summary of the key messages of the informal consultations to retain the proposals offered by some of the Member States and the gist of the discussions. The Co-facilitators summary of key messages could inform the next phase of the GA and ECOSOC alignment, and would include the recommendations of the Co-facilitators contained in an annex.

ANNEX

[Placeholder: Recommendations of the Co-facilitators]
