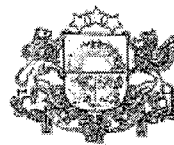




**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF YEMEN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

2 March 2006

Excellency,

We have the honour to refer to our letter of 28 February, inviting you to the second meeting of the ad hoc working group on revitalization of the General Assembly on Friday, 3 March at 10 a.m. in Conference Room 4.

As mentioned in that letter, we are now circulating a background note, prepared by the Secretariat, on the state of implementation of previous resolutions on revitalization of the General Assembly. We hope that the note will be helpful to you in identifying the tasks lying ahead for our working group.

Yours sincerely,

Ambassador Abdullah M. Alsaïdi
Co-Chair

Ambassador Solveiga Silkalna
Co-Chair

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

BACKGROUND NOTE REVITALIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

To facilitate consideration and examination of the current status of General Assembly revitalization by Member States in advance of the forthcoming status report requested of the Secretary-General in paragraph 19 of A/RES/59/313, this note intends to do three things: flag reporting requirements of the 60th session emerging from the revitalization resolutions of the 58th and 59th sessions; provide a brief overview of revitalization; and offer an initial indication of items implemented and partially implemented.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

In the course of the current session, two reports on revitalization are to emerge. Paragraph 4 of A/RES/59/313 “decide[d] to establish an ad hoc working group open to all Member States to identify ways to further enhance the role, authority, effectiveness, and efficiency of the General Assembly, inter alia, by building on relevant Assembly resolutions and reviewing the agenda and working methods of the Assembly” and paragraph 5 of the same resolution “decide[d] also that the **ad hoc working group shall submit a report** with specific recommendations to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session”. Similarly, paragraph 19 of A/RES/59/313 “request[ed] the **Secretary-General to submit a status report to the General Assembly** at its sixtieth session on the implementation of all resolutions regarding the revitalization of its work, including A/RES/58/126 , A/RES/58/316, *and the present resolution*” [italics added]. As a precursor to paragraph 19 of A/RES/59/313, A/RES/58/316, in its third operative paragraph, also “request[ed] the Secretary-General to report on all aspects of the implementation of A/RES/58/126 and the present resolution to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session”.

BACKGROUND

The scope of these requests is broad and important and has the potential to make a significant impact. The task should not be underestimated. While revitalization efforts have been particularly intense in more recent sessions, the active consideration of this issue can be traced back to the forty-fifth session, with individual elements of it (such as issues of documentation and the consolidation of agenda items) appearing separately in other contexts even earlier. In the span of these last fifteen years alone, some 18 different resolutions on revitalization or aspects of it, comprising 150 different tasks, has emerged.

It is evident, looking at these resolutions from within the rubrics identified by the Co-Chairs in their letter of 9 February 2006, that 16 of these 18 resolutions mentioned or dealt with the role and authority of the General Assembly. Six resolutions have addressed aspects of the working methods of the Assembly, a number of them specifically addressing the working methods of the six Main Committees, the General Committee and the conduct of business at the plenary level. The agenda of the GA and efforts to rationalize it are addressed in six different resolutions between the 48th and 59th sessions. The Office of the President of the GA and the need to enhance and strengthen

the role of the President has been highlighted in various resolutions, in which concerns have ranged from the need for more appropriate office space for the President to the need for the President to interact more with his/her counterparts from other UN Organs including the Presidents of the other principal organs, with six resolutions touching on these aspects.

IMPLEMENTATION

Without wishing to anticipate the forthcoming report requested of the Secretary-General on the status of revitalization efforts, the initial survey of implementation contained in the following paragraphs, and intended as indicative rather than definitive, is provided as a preliminary response to delegations, with the hope that it will assist them in their deliberations.

Even initially, it is clear that a significant number of the requests and provisions of recent resolutions have already been **implemented**. These include, but are not limited to:

- The five additional posts made available to supplement current support of the Office of the President of the General Assembly (A/RES/58/126 Annex section A, paragraph 10);
- The transitional office accommodation and other support provided to the President-elect of the General Assembly (A/RES/58/126 Annex section A, paragraph 11);
- The election of the Full Bureaux of the Main Committees three months in advance of the forthcoming session (A/RES/58/126 Annex section B, paragraph 9);
- The organization of the agenda of the General Assembly under the headings of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and the current Strategic Framework (A/RES/58/316 Annex section B, paragraph 2);
- The General Committee meeting throughout the session to advise the General Assembly on the efficient organization, coordination and management of its work (A/RES/58/316 Annex section E paragraph 5(b));
- The Secretary-General submitting reports at the 58th and the 59th sessions of the General Assembly including requested information on the status of documentation (A/RES/58/316 Annex section E paragraph 5(d), see also A/58/864 and A/59/860);
- The Secretariat providing services for ad hoc groups (A/RES/59/313, OP 6);
- Meetings between the Presidents of the GA and the Security Council, as well as the tripartite meetings of the Presidents of the Assembly, the Security Council, and ECOSOC (A/RES/58/126 Annex section A paragraph 6), being scheduled with greater frequency and regularity.

In addition to these, and of particular interest to the Ad Hoc Working Group, the Assembly did, as indicated in A/RES/58/316 Annex section D paragraphs 4a-m and

requested in A/RES/58/126 Annex section B paragraph 5, closely scrutinize its Agenda and make a number of modifications to it. These were implemented in the fifty-ninth session.

As specifically regards the role and authority of the General Assembly, while many earlier resolutions affirmed and reaffirmed its importance, often in their preambles, it was not until the 58th session that specific decisions were taken by the GA to enhance its role and authority. Further concrete decisions on practical measures to strengthen the role and authority of the GA, as set out under the Charter, were also specifically set out in the separate section devoted to this issue in A/RES/59/313. These measures included, inter alia, the role of the GA to discuss issues pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with relevant Charter Articles.

In addition to these, a number of important mandates that have already been **partially implemented** can also be flagged:

- To varying degrees, the Main Committees have made significant progress in implementing a number of the tasks confided to them in A/RES/58/316 Annex section C:
 - A number of them rationalizing their agendas through biennialization, triennialization, clustering, or elimination of items (C3a);
 - All but one of them adopting early provisional programmes of work for upcoming sessions (C3b);
 - One of them commencing and others enhancing the practice of holding interactive debates and panel discussions (C3c) and question time (C3d);
 - Most of them committing to enhancing their websites (C3e);
 - A number of the Committees also complying with paragraphs C3f (in which the bureaux-elect are to meet immediately after their election to discuss their work), paragraph C3g (in which incoming bureaux are to meet with outgoing bureaux), and paragraph C3h (in which informal briefings of each Main Committee are to be held prior to the opening of each session to discuss the organisation of work);
- The General Assembly's Rules of Procedure, which A/RES/59/313, OP 14 requested be issued on line in a consolidated version, have been put on line in their current form. The preparation of a consolidated version that will supersede the versions now on line and in print is under consideration pending availability of resources;
- The use of optical scanners, taking due account of security requirements (A/RES/59/313, OP 15), is still being actively examined and considered.
- Regarding efforts to ensure that documentation and reports are issued well in advance, in keeping with the six-week rule, as referred to A/RES/49/221 B and A/RES/59/309, extraordinary measures have been implemented by DGACM to ensure department-wide compliance (A/RES/59/313, OP 18);
- With regard to section F of the Annex to A/RES/58/316, on the consolidation of reports, some reports have indeed been consolidated as appropriate and agreed, though further consultations on this question could be productive;

- The General Committee has also still to make recommendations to the General Assembly on ways and means of improving its own working methods (A/RES/58/316 Annex section E paragraph 5h), although discussions have been held in this respect during the 59th and 60th sessions.

These issues, among others, might assist and inform consideration by Member States and discussion in the Ad Hoc Working Group in advance of the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General.

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