



Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly

Statement delivered by

Mr. Stefano Tomat

Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

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Co-Chairs,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Acceding country Croatia*, the candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland* and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to express our gratitude for convening this meeting to discuss the issue of working methods of the General Assembly and its main committees.

Co-Chairs,

We believe that it is a revitalized GA that can fulfil its political functions, that can make its fair contribution to achieving the principles and goals of the UN, that has meaningful debates, and whose decisions are being respected and make a difference in the world. Each and every member state needs to contribute to this goal. However, we must acknowledge that, so far, attempts in our years-long debates about GA revitalization have yielded only limited results.

It is primarily the responsibility of each and every member state to improve the working methods of the General Assembly and its Main Committees. We attach particular importance to this topic, which, in our opinion has the biggest potential to make a real change and contribute to GA revitalization, along with the implementation of existing GA resolutions.

We are convinced that the consolidation of existing resolutions and decisions would bring real added value. In this respect, we believe that the comprehensive review of the inventory in document A/63/959 and the updates thereof are key stepping stones towards a thorough revitalization of the GA. We think that we have all the elements, all the ideas in the inventory to move forward, both in the resolutions on revitalization and in the ones annexed to the Rules of Procedure of the GA. Member states now need to review those ideas, revise and up-date those elements if needed, and take determined action to implement them. This inventory should therefore continue to be updated on a regular basis, and should also include indications of reasons for non-implementation.

Regarding the agendas of the GA and its Main Committees, we are of the opinion that it would be appropriate to examine thoroughly the possibilities for further biennialisation or triennialisation, as well as clustering and elimination of items. This would allow rationalizing and streamlining the agendas. Each Main Committee may facilitate this task through evaluating the topicality and frequency of agenda items allocated for its consideration. In this regard, leadership by the Chairs and the bureaux of the Main Committees is of particular importance.

We commend the achievements of the Second Committee, which took decisions on improving its working methods, thanks to the commitment of its Bureau, Chair and Secretary as well as all the delegations. The Second Committee took the lead among the Main Committees of the GA in implementing the relevant provision of resolution 64/301. We are confident that other Main Committees will follow suit. In this context, we would like to encourage President Al-Nasser to pursue the reflection he has initiated on the Fifth

* Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

* Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.

Committee's working methods, and we hope to see very soon concrete outcomes of the retreat held under his leadership in April.

Co-Chairs,

Taking experiences and lessons learned in the processes and groups outside our ad hoc Working Group might be an effective and coherent way to achieve our common goals. For example, achievements in improving working methods of the Security Council, in particular in the framework of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Procedural Questions of the Security Council, could be considered as applicable to certain extent by the General Assembly and its Main Committees.

As regards High-Level Meetings held during the time of the General Debate, we believe that they have an indisputable added value. At the same time, organizational and procedural aspects, such as scheduling issues, should be looked into very carefully. The role of the General Committee and the President of the General Assembly should be further explored in this regard. Our Working Group could envisage coming up with indicative guidance on this in its report to be submitted to the General Assembly.

As to the technical measures aimed at revitalizing the UNGA, we reiterate the importance of improving the existing balloting system and the need to adapt it to modern technologies. A briefing on technical aspects related to the conduct of electronic voting would prove useful for the discussion of this matter.

We also stress the need to introduce measures to improve the quality and accuracy of UNGA documents, in the six official languages, so as to ensure that they are systematically produced and translated in a more cost effective way, using the texts and speeches as they were written or given in the original language. It is also important for measures to be taken to ensure that more documents are concise, relevant and issued on time in all official languages, whether they are intended for main Committees, Commissions, or other bodies within the UN system.

We note with appreciation the efforts made by the Secretariat to reduce the distribution of the paper version of the UN documents to the permanent missions. The savings induced could, inter alia, be used to improve the quality of these documents. As in previous years, we strongly support a wider use of internet in order to timely distribute documents and information, taking into account the relevant rules and procedures of the General Assembly and the existing resources.

Finally, we look forward to the continued discussions of the Working Group with a view to achieving concrete value-added results.

Thank you.

