

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to express Egypt's appreciation for your decision to include "Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly" as one of your main priorities during the 66th session, and for your pledge to intensify the efforts to revitalize the General Assembly, so that it maintains its rightful institutional role, and to render it more efficient and able in responding to emerging situations of common concern.

I seize this opportunity to thank H.E. Ambassador Dalius Cekuolis, the Permanent Representative of Lithuania, and H.E. Ambassador Camillo Gonsalves, the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for their strong leadership in Co-Chairing the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly during the 65th session, and to pledge full support for the newly appointed Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group during the current session, H.E. Ambassador Ombeni Y. Sefue, the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, and H.E. Ambassador Alexander Lomaia, the Permanent Representative of Georgia, in pushing the process of the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly forward towards achieving more tangible results.

I would like also to associate Egypt's statement with the statement made by H.E. Ambassador Mourad Benmehidi the Permanent Representative of Algeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and to supplement some additional points which Egypt deems necessary for the success of the revitalization process of the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

The revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a critical component of the overall reform of the United Nations. For almost two decades, specifically since 1993, Member States adopted by consensus more than seventeen consecutive resolutions containing specific measures aimed at revitalizing and enhancing the work of the General Assembly as the Chief deliberative, policy-making and representative principal organ of the United Nations. Unfortunately, these measures agreed by consensus were not fully implemented, due mainly to the lack of political will to ensure that the General Assembly plays its leading role in global governance, in strict observance of the delicate balance of competence established by the Charter between all principal organs, in particular the Security Council.

Therefore, Egypt believes that the first and crucial step to achieve progress in the revitalization of the General Assembly would be ensuring the honest implementation, and translating into action, of all previous resolutions adopted on this issue, in addition to the new measures that could be adopted in the current session. In this regard, the Ad Hoc Working Group should continue the thorough evaluation of the status of implementation of previous resolutions, and the establishment of a follow up mechanism to clearly identify constraints behind gaps of implementation and to approve ways and means to address those constraints and gaps.

The main challenge facing the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is the continuous encroachment by the Security Council on the role and functions of the General Assembly. The Security Council is constantly attempting to redefine its scope of competence through wider interpretation of what issues constitute a threat to international peace and security, including issues that are already under consideration in the General Assembly and the ECOSOC, such as the recent meetings of the Security Council on issues like development, climate change, diseases, trafficking in drugs and persons to mention a few. The Ad Hoc Working Group could identify those areas of encroachment in its upcoming deliberations, in order to start addressing the overlap in activities and the waste of resources it results in.

The General Assembly should, in the meantime, assume a more proactive role and respond, in a timely manner, to emerging challenges and evolving events and crises, including those that pose threats to international peace and security. Moreover, the General Assembly should remain vigilant and take proper actions when the Security Council fails to address cases involving genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, grave violations to international humanitarian law and cessation of hostilities between belligerent parties, in fulfillment of its primary responsibility according to Articles 10 to 14 and 35 of the United Nations Charter. In this regard, Egypt commends you, Mr. President, for choosing "The role of mediation in settlement of disputes" as the theme for the 66th session of the General Assembly, which confirms the role of the Assembly in areas of international peace and security, including mediation as a vital tool for conflict prevention and resolution.

On the other hand, the General Assembly should continue holding inclusive and interactive thematic debates on current issues of critical importance to the international community, and should increase its interaction with civil society, non-governmental organizations and private sector on relevant issues, which will contribute positively in increasing the visibility and public awareness of the General Assembly. In this context, Egypt appreciates and encourages your initiative, Mr. President, in convening a meeting for a dialogue with the civil society on the 4th of October 2011, in order to explore areas of further cooperation and interaction between the General Assembly and the Civil Society.

Mr. President,

Ensuring the effectiveness of the office of the President of the General Assembly is essential to improve the role and authority of the Assembly, including through enhancing the institutional memory of the office. Furthermore, we should maintain the practice of electing the President of the General Assembly at least three months before the opening of the new session of the General Assembly in September, in order to allow the President to properly prepare before assuming his/her responsibilities. It is also practical that the outgoing President submits a brief report to the President-elect, reflecting best practices and lessons learned as well as specific recommendations as appropriate.

In relation to this issue, and according to paragraph 10 of resolution 64/301, I wish to remind that the fifth committee is supposed to review the budget allocation to the President's office in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013. We believe

that the fifth committee and the ACABQ should include specific language on this important issue to start enhancing the Office of the President immediately.

The selection and appointment of the Secretary General is yet another issue of great interest to the wider membership. Special attention should be paid to the implementation of the related previous General Assembly resolutions on this issue, including resolutions 51/241 and 60/286, and to identify practical measures to ensure the enforcement of their provisions. As the United Nations Charter provides distinct roles and responsibilities for the General Assembly and the Security Council, we should focus on the role of the General Assembly in ensuring the transparency, accountability and competitiveness of the process to be more involved at early stage of the selection process when identifying candidates for this key post.

Coordination between the General Assembly and the Security Council should be enhanced in the admission of new members to the United Nations according to Article 4 (2) of the Charter. Coordination is also important in the elections that are held in parallel in both organs, such as the elections to appoint the members of the International Court of Justice.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the General Assembly is and will remain the most representative and democratic principal organ of the United Nations, where the 193 Countries are all permanent members, on equal footing, with equal voices, without any Veto. For that reason, the wider membership should renew their collective commitment and exert the needed political will in order to enable the General Assembly to play its leading role in an increasingly complex world with escalating pressing issues, and to meet the longstanding and emerging challenges.

Egypt is confident that under your leadership and the guidance of the Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group we will make strides towards achieving maximum progress in the process of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Thank you Mr. President.
