

Mr. President,

Finland fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. In addition, I have the honour to make a few additional remarks.

Let me begin by thanking the two previous Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on GA Revitalization. The Permanent Representatives of Lithuania and St. Vincent and the Grenadines did excellent work to further the issue. We also welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representatives of Tanzania and Georgia as the new Co-chairs to lead this important process.

Mr. President,

Finland attaches great importance to the General Assembly as the most global and truly representative body on the planet. The Assembly has a central role in global governance and we would like to see it strengthened further. As many of you know, Finland has been organizing a retreat for the newly elected members of the Security Council for the past nine years. This year we decided to try a similar approach on the General Assembly and invited the PGA, PGA-elect and members-elect of the General Committee to a retreat in Tarrytown. We also invited the President of the 62nd Session, Mr. Srgjan Kerim, to deliver a keynote speech based on his experiences.

One of the aims was to give the incoming General Committee an opportunity to familiarize themselves further with the working methods of the General Assembly. The Secretariat led by Under-Secretary-General Shaaban did a great job in highlighting some of the relevant issues pertaining to the practice of the GA and the General Committee. The participants also received a briefing from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland on the PGA handbook. The Swiss handbook was welcomed as an excellent practical contribution to the strengthening of the institutional memory of the PGA's office and a very useful reference to us all.

Another purpose of the retreat was to give the elected members of the General Committee an opportunity to discuss ways of strengthening the GA in a more informal setting. This brainstorming produced many useful ideas and suggestions. For example, many participants thought that there might be scope for development in the role of the General Committee in strengthening the GA. Among other things, there were also interesting ideas on thematic debates and outreach activities. The Permanent Representative of Lithuania, His Excellency Mr. Dalius Cekuolis, was also present in his capacity as Co-chair of the revitalization process. His remarks served to connect the discussions at the retreat to the wider process of revitalization of the GA.

We have circulated the report of the retreat - document A/65/945 - to you all, so I won't go into more detail on the deliberations. Instead, I want to thank the Secretariat and all participants for a successful retreat. I hope the results will be useful to the wider membership and for the revitalization process. It is our intention to organize the retreat again next year and to develop the concept further.

Thank you, Mr. President.