

United Nations  Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

30 July 2001

**Letter of H.E. Mr. Harri Holkeri,
President of the 55th Session of the General Assembly,
to all Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the
United Nations, New York**

Excellency,

With a view to the informals/informals tomorrow, 31 July, and as a follow-up to the informal/informals of the Plenary, on July 26, on the revitalization of the General Assembly; improving the efficiency of the General Assembly, please find attached a summary on the status of negotiations at this stage in a form of a draft decision of the General Assembly.

Given the opinions expressed by many delegations I believe that the most appropriate way to bring this exercise into a conclusion is to adopt a decision of the General Assembly. Therefore, I have presented the agreements reached so far in the informals/informals in this format. You will note that issues where there is no agreement yet, have also been included in the draft, but with appropriate explanations.

In most of the issues there is already an agreement and consensus to move forward. Therefore, it is my sincere hope that we can reach the final agreements and compromises based on this draft, so that the decision could be adopted before the session of the Assembly is over.

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

Yours sincerely,
Harri Holkeri

**General Assembly
Fiftieth fifth session
Agenda item; 61 Strengthening of the United Nations System
and 62 Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly**

Draft of 30 July 2001

Decision

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/241, 48/264, 47/233 and other relevant resolutions;

1. Decides to adopt the text contained in the annex to the present implementing decision;
2. Decides to continue its consideration of agenda items Strengthening of the United Nations System and Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly during the 56th Session

ANNEX

Purpose (agreed)

This process focuses on the implementation existing resolutions and decisions, in particular 51/241. Other resolutions such as 48/264 and 47/233 have also been taken into account. The improvement of procedures and working methods of the Assembly is only a first step towards more substantive improvements and revitalization of the Assembly. The goal of this continued exercise is to enable the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the UN to play its role effectively.

1. THE AGENDA (agreed)

The rationalization and streamlining of the agenda should continue in order to enable the Assembly to focus its work on priority issues. Any change or suggestion concerning the agenda is done with the understanding that Member States can propose any issue or item to be brought to the attention and consideration of the Assembly at any time.

a) Clustering and biennialization (agreed)

Co-operation item:

All co-operation items will be clustered under the item 'Co-operation between the United Nations and regional and other organisations', and individual co-operation items will become sub-items of this item.

Practical adjustment measures to implement the clustering will be taken in September 2001 by the Assembly in conjunction with the adoption of the agenda for the 56th Session.

This item will be biennialized, starting from 57th session, so that the co-operation item will henceforth appear in the agenda on odd numbers of the Assembly session.

Based on this decision the biennialization would have to be reflected also in each resolution in conjunction of their adoption already during the 56th Session when applicable.

There will be a joint debate under this item, during which all or some co-operation aspects and organisations may be addressed.

The resolutions, if any, under each sub-item will remain separate.

Item: Co-operation between the UN and regional and other organisations

- a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States
- b) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee
- c) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community
- d) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference
- e) Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab State
- f) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- g) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity
- h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization
- i) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- j) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Council of Europe
- k) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

l) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States

m) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

n) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation

o) Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organisation of la Francophonie

p) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

b) Items for biennialization (agreed)

The following items will be considered in the 56th Session and thereafter biennially:

- United Nations Reform and revitalization (Items 70,71,72/UNGA56)
- Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social; and related fields (Item 73/UNGA56)
- Support of the U.N. for new or restored democracies (Item 47/UNGA56);
- The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti (Item 59/UNGA56)
- Zone of peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (Item 48/UNGA56)

The following item is already considered biennially, every odd year.

- Elimination of coercive measures as a means of political and economic compulsion (Item 31/UNGA55)

c) Items for committee level consideration (agreed)

The following item will be considered in the 3rd Committee starting in 56th Session.

- Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the Special Session of the General Assembly in this regard (Item 39/UNGA56)

2. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS

a) Implementation of paragraphs 7 and 12 of resolution 51/241 (this proposal is still under discussion; new format and language added for consideration)

Paragraph 7 states:

"The report of the Secretary General on the work of the Organization shall be considered in Plenary meetings of the General Assembly immediately after the general debate. The President of the Assembly should assess the debate on this item. In the light of that assessment, informal consultations shall be held, under the chairmanship of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to discuss action that may be required by the Assembly on the basis of the debate on the report."

· Accordingly, the President, after consideration of the reports by the General Assembly, shall inform the General Assembly of his assessment of the debate in order for the Assembly to determine the need for further action as provided in resolution 51/241, paragraph 7.

Paragraph 12 states:

"The President of the General Assembly shall assess the debate on this item and consider the need for further consideration of the report of the Security Council. In the light of the assessment, informal consultations shall be held after the debate in Plenary meetings under the chairmanship of the President or one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, to discuss the need and content of any action by the Assembly based on the debates".

· Accordingly, the President, after consideration of the reports by the General Assembly, shall inform the General Assembly of his assessment of the debate in order for the Assembly to determine the need for further action as provided in resolution 51/241, paragraph 12.

b) Efforts towards more concise reports, issued and submitted on time (agreed)

Member States need to take concrete actions to implement paragraph 32 of 51/241, inter alia, by requesting more integrated reports.

The General Assembly secretariat, in consultation with the substantive departments, should look for synergies and integration of reports while preparing the implementation memo for resolutions.

Member States, United Nations agencies and departments should make a serious effort to submit their replies and inputs within given deadlines.

The Secretariat should provide further suggestions on what actions could be taken to speed up the preparations of reports and scheduling of meetings.

The secretariat should keep the President and the General Committee informed on this issue on a regular basis throughout the sessions.

3. ORGANIZATION OF WORK (agreed in principle, new language added)

In order to implement paragraph 28 of Resolution 51/241 fully, greater use of facilitators, where appropriate, by the President is encouraged.

4. THE GENERAL COMMITTEE (agreed)

In order to enhance the capacity of the General Committee to assist the President in the conduct of the business of the General Assembly and to improve the continuity between different sessions of the Assembly the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly should designate at the outset of each Assembly Session an alternate representative for the duration of the whole Assembly Session. This designation could be done informally, without an amendment to Rule 39 of the Rules of Procedure, through a letter to the President of the General Assembly.

5. ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

a) Consultations (agreed in principle, new language added for consideration)

In order to make more useful the regular consultations, provided in 51/241, paragraph 43, between the President of the Assembly and the Presidents of Security Council and ECOSOC these meetings should be provided with the support of the secretariat, including providing a brief of current issues and providing reports in writing to Members through regional chairs, as appropriate.

b) Strengthening the office of the president (no principle objection; new language added for consideration; financial aspects raised)

c)

Additional measures are required to implement paragraph 44 of Resolution 51/241, particularly in the area of substantive support for the President. Therefore, two professional level posts should be established in the office of the President without delay. One post would cover political issues and one economic and social issues.

6. ENHANCING THE USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY (not discussed yet)

There is a need to enhance the use of modern technology and information technology within the organisation, including in the negotiating process of the United Nations.

Taking into account the general support in this regard:

The Secretary General is requested to take urgent steps to introduce a system to enable an electronic reading of ballot papers taking due account of the security requirements in this regard.

The Secretary General is requested to look into details of wiring of the main conference rooms of the United Nations to provide delegations and the secretariat with access the Optical Disc System and other databases of the Organization and the internet and make suggestions to this end.

Finally the Secretary General is requested to keep the General Assembly informed on these issues and to make the relevant proposal as appropriate.