

President,

1. I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the 27 members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group Austria, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland. Uruguay, and my own country Costa Rica.
2. The ACT Group promotes a more transparent and efficient United Nations. We believe that the process of the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly constitutes an important avenue towards this goal.
3. We welcome the adoption of Resolution 75/325 and value the constructive discussions held last session by H.E. Ms. Egriselda Aracely González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, and Permanent Representative of Australia, H.E. Mr. Mitch Fifield, and thank them for guiding our work. We take note of the summary of discussions that was circulated, with relevant suggestions on how to improve the role and authority of the General Assembly, its working methods and other crosscutting issues. This constitutes a very useful input for our negotiations.
4. We now look forward to another productive session under their able leadership, and the ACT Group is keen to continue the excellent collaboration with all Member States and groups of States towards a new resolution this session.

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5. As you have mentioned in the last meeting of the General Committee on October 28, the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly is a critical component of the overall reform of the United Nations.
6. According to the latest Resolution on this topic, we agreed to primarily focus during this 77th session of the General Assembly on strengthening the accountability, transparency and institutional memory of the Office of the PGA, and on the transparent and inclusive selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General and other executive heads.
7. In this regard, this session takes on particular significance as an opportunity to put in place a predictable and transparent timeline, for the SG selection process to begin in the 80th session of the General Assembly.
8. Agreeing an indicative timeframe for the process would ease procedural burdens and improve the clarity of the process for Member States and candidates alike. As ACT has previously proposed we would suggest the starting point of the process to be October of the year preceding the appointment, with a deadline of April of the appointment year for the presentation of candidates to ensure a transparent and predictable process.
9. In the 75th session we began crucial discussions on this, and two other aspects of the nomination and selection process of the Secretary General which are still pending: First the prospect of multiple candidates being recommended and secondly the term of the office of the Secretary-General.

10. We consider clarification in these three areas to be vital to ensure a process with the greatest possible transparency and inclusiveness. This is undoubtedly what is expected from us as an Assembly in this most crucial matter.
11. We must continue to build on Resolution 69/321 of 2015 and Resolution 70/305 of 2016, which constituted the framework of the truly historic, inclusive and transparent process of selection and appointment of the current Secretary-General, which continues to provide the basis for all our efforts.
12. We look forward to continuing the discussion and recall the ACT position paper, non-paper and “Lessons learned” document on the selection and appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations which were transmitted to the PGA and the President of the Security Council and circulated to all member States on 8th September 2022, 17th February 2021 and 5th October 2017 respectively. [These documents are registered as General Assembly documents A/76/950, A/75/755 and A/72/514.]
13. The ACT group will continue to stress the importance of the Annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.
14. We continue to call on the report to be submitted to the Assembly on time, and in this respect acknowledge the observation of this timeline in recent years by the Security Council, as set out in its Note by the President S/2019/997. We now challenge the Council to build on its excellent progress. The Assembly would no doubt benefit from an even shorter period between the end of the year in question and the debate on the report to allow for a more timely and relevant discussion.
15. We hope that consultations with the broader membership can be organised in line with paragraph 129 of Note 507, to assess the work of the Council ahead of the drafting of the introduction of the Report.

16. We reiterate that the Council should make better use of the Annual Report to provide a more complete, substantive, and analytical account of its work to the General Assembly, as has been repeatedly called for by this Assembly. The Annual report must also reflect Special Reports of the Council. The use of Special Reports is an important innovation which brings Security Council practice closer into line with the Charter of the United Nations. We thank the Council for its consistent production of special reports in line with resolution 76/262. Going forward, we note that Special Reports can also be used in other scenarios to ensure that the General Assembly is kept informed.
17. In terms of substance, we encourage the codification of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, to prepare for future contingencies and preserve institutional memory in working methods. We also suggest including further analysis on the draft resolutions that failed to be adopted by the Council, including, when applicable, the use of the veto. In this regard, we recall the important mechanism adopted by the General Assembly to ensure accountability on the use of the veto, under Resolution 76/262.
18. Finally, the ACT group will continue its focus this session on the important issue of the role and authority of the General Assembly. In times of increasing tensions and divisions within the international community a strong and efficient General Assembly could not be more important. In times where parts of the UN system are unable to fulfil their mandate, the General Assembly bears a special responsibility. It needs to step up to ensure peace and to protect the United Nations Charter.
19. In this regard, we have seen that the General Assembly was able to step up when a Veto was cast in the Security Council. The Veto Initiative is crucial to ensure accountability within the United Nations system and strengthened the role of the General Assembly.

20. The ACT Group looks forward to working with all of you through focused and targeted discussions during the upcoming thematic sessions and informal dialogues of the Ad-Hoc Working Group. We remain committed to making a concrete contribution to promoting a more transparent, efficient, and coherent United Nations and thereby to a strengthened multilateralism with the United Nations at its core.

I thank you President.