

**78<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly - Item 120**

*Joint debate*

**Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) statement**

**General Assembly, 10 November 2023**

President,

1. I am honoured to take the floor on behalf of the 27 members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group<sup>1</sup>.
2. Thank you, President, for convening this debate on the revitalization of the General Assembly.
3. We also sincerely thank the co-chairs of the last session, Ambassador Lopez of El Salvador and Ambassador Fifield of Australia, and their teams<sup>2</sup> for their committed efforts and guiding our work towards the resolution in September
4. The ACT group congratulates Romania, Ambassador Cornel Feruță, and Saint Lucia, Ambassador Menissa Rambally, on their appointment as co-chairs for the 78<sup>th</sup> Session.
5. In September, we adopted resolution A/RES/77/335. We now kindly ask the President of the General Assembly to work in close collaboration with the Secretariat and Members States for its swift implementation.

President,

6. In the cluster of the Role and Authority of the GA, the revitalization resolution adopted this year recognizes **GA's**

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, 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 Estonia.

<sup>2</sup> Nick Dundon, Sarah van Bronswijk, Liliana Veronica Banos Muller, and Ligia Soto

**Charter mandated role in peace and security.** A role we have seen becoming ever more important. In times when a main organ responsible for international peace and security is unable to fulfil its mandate in key areas, the General Assembly bears a special responsibility to step up to protect the United Nations Charter.

7. In this regard, we have seen the General Assembly step up when a Veto is cast in the Security Council. The **Veto Initiative** is crucial to ensure accountability within the United Nations system and has further strengthened the role of the General Assembly.
8. We have also seen the relevance of the **Uniting for Peace Resolution**.
9. We look forward to the implementation of OP30 of the revitalization resolution that asks the PGA to create a **digital handbook** on the practices and situations in which the General Assembly has had a relevant role in peace and security. We hope this will better equip the GA to take on its role in the future.
10. We are pleased that 2/3 of the UN Membership is now a signatory to the **ACT Code of Conduct** regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes and encourage other to join. We encourage the current 130 signatories to take their responsibility seriously. We would encourage signatories on the Council – who for many years have constituted a procedural majority – to work together to initiate discussions and products.
11. Under the cluster of the Role and Authority of the GA the ACT Group will also continue to stress the importance of the **Annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly**.
12. OP 25 of the latest resolution recognizes the importance of the **timely submission of the report to the General Assembly** to enable scheduling its consideration by the General Assembly

latest in June of each year. We would welcome the report even earlier than the Council deadline in May to ensure a timely and relevant review of the Council's work by the GA.

13. The ACT group further considers that there is also scope to **improve the process of preparation** of the Report. Exchange of views, such as a debate with the wider membership should 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.
14. We continue to encourage the Council to provide a **more complete, substantive and analytical** account of its work to the General Assembly, including further details on the draft resolutions that failed to be adopted by the Council.
15. In this regard, we regret that it was not possible for the General Assembly to recommend to the Council the addition of a **dedicated chapter on the veto** into the Annual Report, which would contain an analysis of the cases in which the veto has been exercised. We hope that the Council will take up this idea in the next report.
16. We commend the references and links to the special reports in the 2022 Annual Report, but we consider that in light of Article 24 paragraph 3 of the UN Charter, a **standalone chapter should also be included on Special Reports**, whether they result from the implementation of Resolution 76/262 or not. This could also be achieved by bringing the process of adoption by the Council of Special Reports in line with the same procedure as that of the Annual Report itself.
17. The ACT Group welcomes the practice by President of the General Assembly to assess the General Assembly debate on Security Council report and transmit **a summary of the recommendations** to Member States and to the Security Council. We encourage the Council to formally consider this summary and

follow-up on the suggestions and observations of the general membership.

18. The ACT Group also wishes to encourage the **timely compilation and use of the monthly Assessments** by Council presidencies. As such assessments don't represent the views of the Council as a whole, but rather the view of the Presidency of the month, its substance should not be reduced to the lowest common denominator.
19. We welcome the reference to **live list of speakers for UNSC open debates outlined in OP29** of the latest resolution on revitalization. The list should be broadly circulated well ahead of time – no later than one day before - to facilitate the greater involvement of the membership as a whole.

President,

20. During the last session, we made some progress when it comes to the **selection of the Secretary-General**. We encouraged member states to have in mind that there is yet to be any women assuming the position of Secretary-General; agreed to create a repository of the past selection and appointments, agreed on some new language on elements to start the process and invited future candidates to voluntarily disclose funding sources of their campaigns.
21. However, ACT underlines that we **need a clear and much more predictable timeline for the overall process**. This was a stark omission from our last resolution, which must be addressed as priority in the 79<sup>th</sup> Session ahead of the next selection process. Agreeing on indicative timeframe for the process would ease procedural burdens and improve clarity of the process for Member States and candidates alike.

I thank you President.