



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram at the UNGA Plenary meeting on Implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations [Item 119]; Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly [Item 120]: Joint Debate**

**(New York, 10 November 2023)**

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**Mr. President,**

I thank you for convening today's joint debate on the implementation of United Nations resolutions, as well as the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

2. I wish to thank Ambassador Mitch Fifield, former Permanent Representative of Australia, and Ambassador Egriselda González López, Permanent Representative of El Salvador, for their significant contributions and stewardship of the revitalization process during the last two General Assembly sessions, and congratulate Ambassador Cornel Feruta, Permanent Representative of Romania, and Ambassador Menissa Rambally, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia, for their appointment as the new co-chairs. We are confident they will make a substantive and path breaking contribution to the General Assembly's revitalization.

3. Pakistan aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by Algeria on behalf of NAM, and we would like to add a few points in our national capacity.

**Mr. President,**

4. The UN General Assembly is the only principal organ with universal membership. The Assembly enjoys extensive authority and functions under the UN Charter as set out in Articles 10, 11, 12, 14 and 35. The only limitations arise from the primary role of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security as set out in Article 12.

**Mr. President,**

5. Pakistan welcomes the several recommendations presented during the consultations on this item. We agree that:

- We should rationalize the Assembly's agenda, amalgamate items and eliminate redundant issues;

- We should streamline resolutions, and make them shorter and more action-oriented;
- The Secretariat's reports can be further improved;
- We can better organize the Plenary and Main Committee meetings, conduct more focused discussions, adopt more specific decisions, and save money.

6. However, the deficits in the Assembly's performance do not arise from any deficiency in its Charter authority or its working methods. While we need to improve the Assembly's processes and methods of work, the revitalization of the Assembly is a political issue, not one of process only.

7. The Assembly's deficiencies arise from the inability and in large measure, the unwillingness of some of major Member States to allow the Assembly to fully utilize its authority and potential.

**Mr. President,**

8. Under the UN Charter, the General Assembly's role is broad and far-reaching. It covers political, security, economic and social, human rights, and humanitarian issues; norm-setting; and treaty-making; as well as the financial and administrative management of the organization and its secretariat.

**Mr. President,**

9. The General Assembly, under the Charter, has vast complementary and residual authority in relation to the promotion and preservation of international peace and security. This authority is explicit whenever the Security Council is unable to act or is prevented from acting.

10. This authority was exercised when the Assembly adopted ES-10/21 on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. In such circumstances, the voice of the entire membership has not only moral but also considerable legal force. The Assembly's recommendations create obligations for the entire international community and the UN

system. We are glad that the Secretary-General and all UN agencies have reflected in their positions the Assembly's call for a ceasefire, humanitarian support and opposition to the displacement of the Palestinian population. We hope that the members of the Security Council will also adhere to this General Assembly resolution.

11. Since the Security Council acts on behalf of the entire UN membership, it should report more frequently and comprehensively to the General Assembly, especially whenever the Council authorizes action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. We also welcome the adoption of General Assembly Res. 76/262 to convene the Assembly within 10 days after the exercise of a veto in the Security Council. It is only through such oversight by the General Assembly that the Council and its members can become accountable for their positions and advance the objective of democratizing the United Nations.

12. The Assembly's role on peace and security also extends to addressing the root causes of conflicts and disputes; in promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with principles of the UN Charter and UN resolutions, including through the provisions for mediation, arbitration and good offices.

13. The Assembly also has the principal responsibility to address the so-called "thematic" aspects of peace and security, such as environment and peace, women, peace and security, and the nexus between peace, development and human rights – the three "pillars" of the United Nations. We would call on Security Council members to restrict the introduction of such thematic issues in the Council since this erodes the authority and legitimate role of the General Assembly.

14. Such erosion has already occurred in two important areas: non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. We consider that the mandate and work under Resolution 1540 is limited to enhancing the capacity of Member States and supplementary to the Disarmament Commission as well as the Conference on Disarmament which have been assigned the principal responsibility by the General Assembly at the First Special Session on Disarmament (SSODI).

15. Similarly, the Security Council has established an entire architecture on counter-terrorism, whereas this issue is one that involves the entire UN membership as evident from the adoption of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. The balanced and comprehensive implementation of the strategy can be best assured by an intergovernmental body working under a mandate of the General Assembly.

**Mr. President,**

16. To enhance the credibility of its decisions, the General Assembly should also establish a dedicated mechanism to monitor the implementation of its own resolutions. As a first step, the Secretariat should be requested to submit, within a specific time-frame, reports on the status of implementation of General Assembly resolutions.

**Mr. President,**

17. Under Article 11 of the Charter, the General Assembly has explicit powers encourage “the progressive development of international law and its codification”. The Assembly’s contributions in establishing global norms have been considerable including such landmark documents as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Declaration on Decolonization and Declaration on Friendly Relations among States. The treaties adopted by the Assembly include human rights Covenants and, most recently, the so-called BBNJ Treaty. It is most disturbing that such law-making functions are being appropriated by the Security Council through the ever more frequent adoption of norms and standards through Chapter VII resolutions. This departure from the Charter is further compounded when norms and standards adopted in restrictive and even non-official bodies are transformed into international law through the back door of such Chapter VII resolutions of the Security Council.

18. International law must be developed, negotiated and adopted in universal forums with the inclusive participation of all Member States. We hope that the Assembly will re-assert its role and that future treaties – whether an International Tax Convention or treaties on development or environment – will be negotiated and adopted by the UN General Assembly.

**Mr. President,**

19. The Assembly has the further responsibility to promote “international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, educational and health fields” and the “realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms”. These functions are now exercised through the Economic and Social Council, UN agencies, and subsidiary bodies such as the Human Rights Council. What is required here are mechanisms to ensure greater coordination, coherence and implementation of the myriad decisions and commitments in these areas of the Assembly’s responsibilities.

20. Finally, the Assembly is authorized to “consider and approve” the UN’s budget and “arrangements” regarding the budgets of certain specialized agencies. Efforts to erode the authority and role of the Assembly’s Budgetary (Fifth) Committee must be resisted. The role of the Committee on Programme and Coordination needs to be strengthened and the ACABQ needs to avoid arbitrary positions in its budgetary recommendations.

21. The Assembly’s administrative role should be further reinforced by requiring the Secretary-General to consult the Assembly on all senior-level appointments, including the appointment of Special Representatives and high-level panels, and ensure both the highest professional qualifications as well as equitable geographical and gender representation in such appointments.

**Mr. President,**

22. Ultimately, a special responsibility also rests on the President of the General Assembly. He must ensure the efficient organization and conduct of its work; appoint the most appropriate, qualified and impartial facilitators, coordinators and other office holders, with the concurrence of the relevant geographical and interest group. He must obtain full and timely information from such office-holders, other UN organs and the Secretariat on the activities of the Organizations and endeavour to keep the general membership informed of these activities, perhaps through a dedicated mechanism. And, to enable the President to perform these responsibilities the Office of the President must be further strengthened with adequate staff and budget.

**Mr. President,**

23. The Pakistan delegation looks forward to working with our two Co-Chairs to promote these objectives and take appropriate decisions through their process at the Summit of the Future to revitalize the UN General Assembly.

**I thank you.**