Statement by Mr. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN on Agenda Items 52 (Revitalization of the General Assembly) and 54 (Strengthening of the United Nations) at the 59th UN General Assembly on 4 October 2004.

Mr. President,

I wish to begin by extending to you our felicitations on your assumption of the office of the President of the General Assembly and assure you of our fullest cooperation during your term in office.

We would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary General for presenting the report of the Secretary General (A/59/354) this morning.

Pakistan fully supports the efforts to revitalize the General Assembly in order to strengthen its role as the chief deliberative organ of the United Nations. However, our efforts will not yield the desired result unless we focus both on enhancing its efficiency as well as restoring its rightful authority. In this regard, last year, Pakistan delegation had presented a set of ideas for the revitalization of the General Assembly. One idea, which continues to remain valid, bears repetition that enhancing the Assembly’s role is a political not a procedural exercise. All Member States would need to demonstrate their resolve and political commitment to ensure that the Assembly becomes the primary locus of the discussions and actions in the United Nations. The Member States will also need to commit themselves to observe and implement the Assembly’s resolutions.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement of Algeria made on behalf of the NAM countries on agenda item 52. We endorse the call that the provisions contained in Resolutions 58/126 and 58/316 should be fully implemented. We believe that consensual decision-making should be the guiding principle in making progress on the important issues under consideration, including reflection of the priorities of the Organization in the agenda of the General Assembly, the reordering of the Assembly’s work, and the working methods of the main committees.

We would like to draw your attention to an important provision of Resolution 58/126, which called for greater interaction between the Presidents of the three principal organs of the United Nations. We believe that greater coordination and coherence in the work of these three organs will bring synergy to our work and add to the central role of the General Assembly as envisaged in the Charter and reflected in the Millennium Declaration. In this context, we welcome the regular meetings of the Presidents of these organs instituted by your predecessor, Mr Julian Hunte, to discuss issues common to the agenda of the three organs within their respective mandates. We would like to take this opportunity to recall Pakistan’s proposal of establishing adhoc Composite Committees with membership drawn from the three main organs in order to address complex emergencies. This idea has already been discussed at the meeting of the three Presidents. We hope that this proposal would be further reflected upon in the context of bringing about greater vitality and synergy in the work of the three principal organs of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

In the context of discussions on agenda item 54, we would like to state that Pakistan attaches high importance to strengthening of the UN system. In this regard, Pakistan has welcomed the establishment of the High Level Panel to examine the major threats and challenges to international peace and security and make recommendations for a collective response. We believe the strengthening of the UN system should be based on Cooperative multilateralism pursued mainly through the United Nations and based on UN charter principles. UN reform should not come at the cost of UN principles.
We would offer our views on different aspects of the UN reform under the relevant agenda items. At today’s meeting, we would like to state that ‘Cooperative multilateralism’ and a strengthened United Nations can be realized only if the General Assembly is enabled to play its role as the supreme organ of the UN, to which the membership of the more restricted organs, the Security Council and ECOSOC, is answerable and accountable. Furthermore, the UN reform cannot yield the desired results so long as the UN and its family of organisations continue to be denied adequate financial resources to perform the myriad and growing tasks with which these organisations are now being entrusted.

Mr. President,

We would now like to offer a few comments on the Report of the Secretary General on UN-civil society relationship. Pakistan regards civil society as an integral part of the political, social, and economic fiber of contemporary societies. Wider participation of the Non-Governmental Organizations is now vital to ensuring the success of international cooperation especially in the field of socio-economic uplift and the advocacy of the rights of the vulnerable segments of societies.

The evolution of the civil society in the past decades and their increased participation in UN activities merits a fresh look at the institutional structure for this interaction to afford a meaningful partnership between the two. It is in this context that Pakistan delegation had extended our full support to the proposal of the Secretary General in his report A/57/387 presented two years ago to strengthen the interaction between the United Nations and the Civil Society.

We have taken note of the proposals made by the Secretary General in response to the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations. The Panel’s report contains a number of useful ideas and suggestions. However, we believe that the changes that we may institute need our careful consideration, particularly their financial, legal and procedural implications. While we would pursue the matter in greater detail during informal discussions, at this stage, we would like to offer a few general observations:

- **First**, there is a need to clearly define the rights and responsibilities of NGOs for their participation in the General Assembly, bearing in mind the need to preserve the Assembly’s intergovernmental nature.
- **Second**, the process of the accreditation must continue to be regulated through intergovernmental consideration and decisions. We agree with the need to streamline the accreditation process. In this regard, we would need to evaluate whether the shifting of the responsibility for the accreditation of NGOs from the NGOs Committee to the General Committee would achieve the desired efficiency.
- **Third**, due respect has to be shown for the local laws, values, and cultural ethos of the country concerned while strengthening role of the civil society in UN sponsored activities in that country. Equally important is the need to ensure that programmes to enhance the capacity of NGOs at the country level are undertaken with the concurrence and full involvement of the host authorities.
- **Fourth**, initiatives for the increased involvement of the NGOs need to be accompanied by the generation of additional funds rather than a mere re-appropriation of the existing development funds.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, Pakistan supports the strengthening of the relationship between the NGOs and the United Nations. However, we believe this exercise should not, in any manner, erode the
Assembly’s intergovernmental nature, nor should it challenge the primacy of the Member States at the United Nations.

Thank you, Mr. President.