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Statement

by

His Excellency Dr. Suriya Chindawongse

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand
to the United Nations**

at the 30th Plenary Meeting

of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

**Agenda Item 119: Implementation of the Resolutions
of the United Nations**

**Agenda Item 120: Revitalization of the Work
of the General Assembly**

10 November 2023, UNHQ, New York

Mr. President,

1. I would like to align myself with the statements delivered by Malaysia on behalf of ASEAN and Algeria on behalf of NAM (Non-Aligned Movement).

2. Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (GA) has never been more urgent or more important.

3. Thailand therefore supports the effective implementation of UNGA resolution 77/335 which, when backed by political will and driven by a unity of purpose, should help build momentum for a more effective GA that we all seek.

4. I would like to extend our support to the work of the two co-facilitators of the Ad Hoc Working Group, the Permanent Representatives of Romania and St. Lucia.

5. Three points that I would like to make.

Mr. President,

6. First, we need to be more streamlined and synergized: in our approach, in our modus operandi and in our mindset.

7. The High-Level Week, for example. It is very important. It provides the requisite platforms for critical policy impetus.

8. But the proliferation of events, the scheduling challenges have caused great strains to all delegations and have reduced the significance and focus of the messages and the impact.

9. So we need to streamline it and perhaps limit high level events to no more than one a day, for example.

10. On enhancing synergy, we support making more effective use of the General Committee (GC) to coordinate the work and develop possible synergies across the Plenary and the Main Committees.

11. We applaud the President of the GA for making more use of the General Committee to facilitate coordination of the GA's work and hope that this good practice will continue.

12. We also look forward to enhanced coordination between the GA and ECOSOC, and to this end, we hope the practice of the Presidents of the GA and ECOSOC co-chairing important events and meetings could be continued.

13. Second is the improvement of working methods of the General Assembly.

14. As has been underscored in the statement on behalf of ASEAN Member States, transparency is critical.

15. Knowing who proposed what is as important as knowing who is paying for what.

16. I will certainly adhere to transparency in exercising my duties as Chair of the Sixth Committee.

17. We also support more use of informal meetings and discussions to facilitate the work of the GA.

18. Third and lastly is the issue of sharing of information in the UN system, whether at UN meetings including the General Assembly or through UN on-line platforms. Of particular importance is the detrimental consequences on issues related to privacy and dignity when inappropriate information, in the form of images, are shared.

19. Thailand supports the timely access by the public to deliberations and discussions of the UN, including through live coverage of the GA and other UN meetings. This is an exercise in transparency and will help promote a better understanding of and support for the UN amongst the peoples of the world. This must be continued.

20. But what do we do when inappropriate photographic or video footage that have detrimental impact on issues of privacy and dignity is shown in public meetings of the GA or other UN meetings?

21. What do we do when such inappropriate images are broadcasted in real time to the world?

22. How do we deal with possible adverse impact of such images being seen by some viewers, young viewers and children?

23. Who takes the responsibility?

Mr. President,

24. If we cannot answer these questions, it must mean that there is a gap or loophole in the system that needs to be addressed. Because ultimately, our action or inaction will reflect on the UN and the GA as a whole.

25. So it is time for the general membership to reflect on this matter and for the revitalization process to consider addressing it through the Ad Hoc Committee.

26. There are a number of initial ideas and in this connection, I appreciate the fruitful dialogue I have had with the UN Secretariat, especially the Department of Global Communications, in recent days.

27. One idea is to see whether some practical guidelines could evolve for the UN to use in-house. This could build on ongoing efforts to develop a UN Code of Conduct to protect the integrity of information, as proposed in the Secretary-General's policy brief on Information Integrity on Digital Platforms.

28. Such a code of conduct, however, should not only be aimed at guiding the actions of Member States' and media platforms, but should guide the actions of the UN itself and the Secretariat as well.

29. At a practical level, one could also envisage an SOP or Standard Operating Procedure for meetings of the Plenary and the Committees whereby a live camera on a speaker could be turned away temporarily when there is an attempt to show photographs or video images.

30. For example, the moment I take out my cell phone, like this, the camera should already start pointing away from me and focus somewhere else, as a precaution. Now this is just a simulation: rest assured, I will not use my phone for such purposes!

31. Now people may well ask what criteria should be used to determine which images are appropriate or inappropriate. One such criteria is simply whether we believe such images should be viewed by children. If not, then they should not be shown.

32. At any rate, we hope to work closely with Member States to develop practical ideas on how best to deal with inappropriate photographic or video images in UN meetings.

33. At the end of the day, we recognize that ultimately, it is we, the Member States, and our respective wisdom that will be the best guarantee of ensuring that inappropriate images do not make their way into these respectful halls of the UN and into the public domain.

34. To conclude, Mr. President, a revitalized UNGA is an integral part of the ongoing efforts to have a strengthened UN system that is fit for the present as well as future-ready.

35. Thailand extends its cooperation for this important endeavour of the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

36. Thank you, Mr. President.
