STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON INFORMAL MEETING ON REVITALIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE 61ST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON JUNE 12, 2007

Mr. Co-facilitator,

We thank the co-facilitators for their work resulting in the draft resolution for today's discussion. We recognize the enormous effort invested in the process of widespread consultations, including bilateral interviews, roundtable interactive debates, as well as written responses sought through a questionnaire. The process has been democratic and inclusive and geared to hearing the views of every delegation represented in this august body. The co-facilitators have brought both idealism and energy to their task.

The resolution emerging from these consultations contains ideas that appeared to have the most widespread acceptance. New ideas or further movement on accepted ideas can emerge only from reflection upon what is currently available, followed by negotiations, consisting of several rounds of informal informals. After some important amendments necessary to ensure conformity with the Charter and recent agreements, we can consider the draft resolution as a basis for our work. However, if we have to move beyond agreed language and build upon progress made in the 60th UNGA, as perhaps implied by Ambassador Badji, we feel that such informals would have to be held.

Mr. Co-facilitator,

We broadly associate ourselves with the statement made by Algeria on behalf of NAM.

The starting point in this discussion can be the language used to express agreed concepts. Paragraphs that reflect agreed principles or reflect ideas agreed recently would be best expressed in language derived from previous resolutions. This is simply a practical thing that would facilitate forward movement. The reason is that agreed

language, though not the most creative, does represent the balance that we have been able to achieve in the past. It is also not our intention to redefine the role or functions of the GA. We do not need to try to reinvent the wheel, especially when the wheel comes from the Charter. However, the further task, if we all so desire, is how to ensure that the wheel does not spin in one place but actually advances.

As the purpose of this exercise is not to rewrite the Rules of Procedure, we would prefer that language on the role of the General Committee be consistent with the Rules of Procedure or be taken from agreed language of the recent past. Ops 3 and 7, in particular should be made consistent with the Rules of Procedure, while OP 5 can be deleted. OP 8 contains a mix of two ideas. The first part regarding the level of participation in the GA is a decision that is the prerogative of each delegation, while the second part on time limits for statements is inconsistent with para 73 of the Conclusions of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the GA.

It is necessary to remember that we are engaged in this exercise to strengthen and revitalize the General Assembly. The improvement in the procedures and working methods of the GA are only the first step. They are a means to an end, not an end in itself. The revitalization process must focus on substantive measures to restore and enhance the role and authority of the GA, including in the maintenance of international peace and security; as the chief oversight organ; deciding on management and procurement for peacekeeping operations, among others, as provided for in the Charter. This can not be done by giving flexibility to the Secretariat over issues that are in the domain of the GA as the chief oversight organ. We would seek deletion of OP 21 giving more flexibility since this issue has not found favour with the majority of Member States in the Fifth Committee.

It is in the same context that we would suggest changing the title and reordering the contents of Annex B. By combining the role of the GA and its working methods in the same section, the impression created is that the role of the GA is determined or influenced by its working methods. In GA resolution 60/286, as also in 59/313 and 58/126, the cluster on the role of the GA deals with the "role and authority of the GA". Working methods of the GA are dealt with in a separate cluster in all three resolutions, while 58/316 is devoted almost entirely to the working methods of the GA and the Main

Committees. Annex B should, therefore, be appropriately renamed and its contents reorganised.

The President of the GA can play an important role in the process of strengthening and revitalizing the GA. Recent resolutions have, therefore, focussed on strengthening the role and leadership of the PGA. The PGA's Office has been strengthened by providing additional staff and other measures have also been agreed to. It is now time to assess the usefulness and adequacy of the several measures adopted. We do not believe that this resolution can pronounce on the budget for the PGA's Office. That is an issue for the Fifth Committee to consider. However, the draft resolution includes an interesting proposal to change the procedure for the election of the PGA. We would not like to take away (in fact we would like to reaffirm) the prerogative of the regional groups in the election of the PGA and would therefore suggest that OP 21 be amended so that the same country is encouraged to propose more than one candidate. We do not believe that this would deter Foreign Ministers from coming forward: after all Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers have not hesitated to enter the contest for the post of Secretary-General and they have not been selected.

Annex D on selection of the Secretary-General seems to be back-tracking on what has already been agreed. Resolution 60/286 adopted towards the end of last GA, devotes Cluster II to a substantive and detailed consideration of the process of selection of the SG. Apart from recalling Article 97 of the Charter, it draws from relevant resolutions, namely 11/1 and 51/241. It calls for the process to be made more transparent and inclusive of all Member States, provides for consultations with all Member States by the PGA to identify potential candidates, as well as for presentation of views by the candidates to all Member States of the GA. Given that the process of selection of the SG has only recently been concluded, the need for this section of the draft resolution may be questioned by some. However, we believe that it is necessary to discuss this issue now that we have the advantage of distance from any imminent change in the SG's office. However, further movement or progress on the agreed language can only come out of negotiations.

We reiterate the questions already posed by NAM on the issue of implementation of resolutions. We need to focus on why some of the provisions of previous resolutions on GA revitalization have remained unimplemented. In this context, we request that para 23 be changed to reflect the` language of OP 2 (c), (d) and (e) of resolution 59/313.

The language as currently drafted is not in keeping with Article 15 of the Charter.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

We are aware of the strenuous efforts that have been invested in the process of preparing this draft resolution. We respect the democratic process that you have adopted. However, further progress on this important issue can emerge only out of serious negotiations. In the meantime, we hope that distortions that have crept into the language would be rectified so that we do not contradict the Charter, nor backtrack on recent agreements. To summarise the conclusion, let me refer to the metaphor of the page of the journal which should certainly be in conformity with the directives of the GA; however if we change the correlation of forces then the page would change by itself and remain changed.

Thank you, Mr. Co-Facilitator.

BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS