



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF
CHAIR OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE FOR THE 66TH SESSION OF UNGA AND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE MEETING OF THE AD-HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE
REVITALIZATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 30 APRIL 2012**

Co-Chairs,

I would like to express my appreciation to the Co-Chairs for your leadership and effort in steering the work of this Ad-Hoc Working Group. I believe that with your esteemed stewardship, we would be able to move forward in improving the working method and identify best practices of the Main Committees.

2. As Chair of the Third Committee for the 66th Session, I would also like to thank the Co-Chairs for giving me the opportunity to report on the work of the Third Committee in our common endeavor to enhance the quality of discussions and the positive impact of its deliberations and decisions with Member States. Document A/C.3/66/CRP.1 has been issued and presented in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 15 of General Assembly (GA) resolution 65/315, in which the Main Committees were encouraged to discuss their working methods at the 66th Session with a view to identifying best practices and improving working methods.

Co-Chairs,

3. The Third Committee of the General Assembly convened its 66th Session from 3 October until 22 November 2011, in which a total of 50 meetings were held, as compared to 52 meetings during the last session. The Committee considered a total of 67 draft resolutions, of which, 66 were adopted. 9 additional draft resolutions were considered compared to the 65th session in which 58 draft resolutions were adopted. Despite the fact that there was fewer meetings at this session and 2 meetings were suspended due to the issue of order of speaker, the Third Committee successfully completed its work as scheduled.

4. Throughout the session, we have heard 532 statements by Members States and Observers. In addition, during the eight weeks of deliberations, the Committee heard

presentations by 33 Special Procedure Mandate Holders and engaged in an interactive dialogue with them, where additional 323 statements were made. Overall, the Committee heard an astonishing 855 statements. This statistics speaks volumes about the intensity of work and the workload of the Committee itself.

Co-Chairs,

5. On the election of the bureau, we reaffirm the practice of having the Chair and Rapporteur elected on the basis of geographical distribution. The bureau should be elected 3 months in advance of the next session in order to encourage advance planning and preparation of the work of the Committee. The incoming Bureau will continue to meet with the outgoing Bureau to share best practices and consult on issues relating to the efficient functioning of the Committee.

6. As you are aware, Third Committee deals with issues relating to the treatment of refugees, population, famine, social welfare, racial discrimination, human rights, ageing, crime prevention, drug control, the advancement of women, the protection of children, and indigenous people. The agenda of the Third Committee has undergone several changes since the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 45/175 and 50/227.

7. All agenda items referred to the Third Committee are considered annually. The submission of some reports and draft resolutions has been biennialized, and it is the intention of the Committee to proceed further in this direction. The Committee will continue, in consultations with Member States, to consider and make proposals for the further biennialization, triennialization or clustering of items on its agenda, while taking into account the relevant recommendations of the Ad-Hoc Working Group.

Co-Chairs,

8. It is the established practice to hold interactive debates and “question time” with the heads of departments and offices, representatives of the Secretary-General, special rapporteurs and other special mechanisms/ procedures following the introduction of reports by executive heads and senior members of the Secretariat at the beginning of each discussion.

9. Statements made during the general discussion under each agenda item or cluster of agenda items continue to be limited to 7 minutes for individual delegations and 15 minutes for statements made on behalf of a group. Since the Third Committee holds individual general discussions on each item on its agenda, further rationalization by clustering or joint consideration of items would be desirable.

10. The General Assembly, by its resolution 45/175, encouraged delegations to draw up omnibus resolutions to the extent possible. The Committee has been able to adopt this procedure for one item (Rights of the child). Member States are encouraged to ensure that preambular and operative paragraphs are concise, focused and designed to have an impact on policy development. To have short and concise resolutions, it might also be possible to not repeat the same preambular paragraphs from previous years, but to make references instead. Member States are also encouraged to biennialize and triennialize resolutions, in an effort to improve the work of the Committee.

Co-Chairs,

11. Member States should continue to make every effort to reduce the number of requests for report of the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, by considering requesting consolidated reports prepared in accordance with resolution 57/300. There should be no automaticity in requesting reports of the Secretary-General. Reports should be requested only if they would assist in taking stock of developments on a particular issue. Reports shall be substantive and analytical in order to provide the General Assembly with useful elements for its consideration of items. The focus should be kept on recent developments, progress made, challenges, conclusions and recommendations.

12. Additionally, in very rare situations when reports are not available in all languages within the 6-week time frame, then every effort shall be made to make them available, in their advance unedited version, in English only, on the website of the substantive department responsible for them.

13. On this note, I wish to highlight that the late issuance of some documents due to reasons beyond the control of the Secretariat, such as the finalized report of the Human Rights Council (HRC), had hampered the work of the Third Committee as well as preventing the Committee to have a more engaging and constructive session on the issue. For example, the report of the HRC for the 66th Session of the GA included the 18th Regular Session of the HRC, in which the Session ended on 30 September 2011, a mere 2 days before the session of the Third Committee began on 3 October 2011. Although the report of the HRC was not considered until a later date, the issuance of the report did not meet the '6-weeks before consideration' requirement date. Therefore, I believe that if feasible, we should explore the possibility of revisiting GA resolution 65/281 to allow the Secretariat to have sufficient time to issue the document according to schedule.

14. With a view to expediting information-sharing and promoting efficient and cost-effective work, the website of the Third Committee should be regularly improved, developed and utilized. The increased utilization of QuickPlace, the informal Web-based information tool for circulating updated information on the status of the Committee's

work and negotiations, has greatly facilitated the smooth and timely conclusion of the Committee's work in the past few years.

Co-Chairs,

15. Owing to the large number of informal consultations on the draft resolutions tabled in the Committee, the Bureau and delegations have expressed concern at the lack of availability of rooms and secretariat support for the consultations, which can hamper the timely conclusion of the Committee's work. The workload of the Third Committee has traditionally been the highest of all the Main Committees in October and November. It is therefore advisable to review the support given to the secretariat of the Third Committee so that it adequately reflects the requirements in terms of office space and equipment.

16. Moving forward, the President of the General Assembly, through the General Assembly, should endeavor to find a solution to the speaking order of the major groups, so as not to disrupt the proceedings and daily work program of the Main Committees. GA resolution 65/276 should be clarified to avoid differences in interpretation by major groups and Member States.

Co-Chairs,

17. The Third Committee, as we all know, is the voice of the underprivileged and often unfortunate; be it children, older persons, women, migrant workers, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities; voice of those who suffer due to racism, discrimination, or those who wish to exercise their right to self-determination. Our work is therefore very sensitive and is closely watched by people all over the world, and the emotions on some topics before the Committee run high, as expressed in various statements.

18. While preserving the essence of the work of the Committee, I sincerely hope that efforts can be made to make progress on the few aspects of the working method, which I have just mentioned. The Third Committee should consider closer collaboration and cooperation with other Main Committees to identify and address issues that are also under the consideration of those Committees while respecting the division of responsibilities, as well as take into account the experience and best practices of others in improving its methods of work.

19. On this note, I wish to reiterate my commitment in working constructively with you and other members of the Ad-Hoc Working Group in the weeks ahead.

Thank you Co-Chairs.