

General Debate of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the
General Assembly

2nd March 2020

Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) statement

delivered by H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland,
on behalf of the Group

Mister President,

1. I am honored to take the floor on behalf of the 25 members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Uruguay, and my own country Switzerland.
2. The ACT Group promotes a more transparent and efficient United Nations. We believe that the process of the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly constitutes an important avenue towards this goal. We would thus like to thank you, Mister President, for convening today's plenary meeting. We wish also to congratulate H.E. Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, Permanent Representative of Ghana, for assuming the important responsibility of co-chairing this working group, and H.E. Mr. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia, for continuing to provide his dedication and leadership in co-chairing our work. We recall with much gratitude the efforts made by the previous co-facilitators during last session to streamline the resolution and would like to encourage continued efforts in this regard during this year's negotiations.
3. The process of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly is of particular importance this year as we mark the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations. We must seize this commemoration to reaffirm that there is no alternative to multilateralism to address today's and tomorrow's common challenges. We must lead by example within this working group: it is our responsibility to put concretely on display the indispensable values of dialogue and of the search for consensus on the matters that we will be addressing, as they touch upon some of the fundamental aspects of the functioning of the United Nations.
4. The ACT Group looks forward to continuing the excellent collaboration between all member States and groups of States that we have witnessed in the negotiations of resolution 73/341 on the Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. We are committed to strengthen this working group as a unique platform and tool to promote a more efficient, inclusive and coherent United Nations.

Mister President,

5. The ACT Group attaches particular importance to transparent and inclusive selection and appointment processes for the Secretary-General and other executive heads. Building on the advances made by resolution 73/341 under this cluster, we will continue advocating for the

concretization of the principles of transparency and inclusiveness that should govern this process and that are now well established. Our Group notably supports that the lessons learned process of the most recent and truly historic Secretary-General selection be duly referenced in this year's discussions and subsequent resolution, bearing in mind the commitment taken by the General Assembly through resolution 73/341 to explore possible steps to improve the process further.

6. As resolution 73/341 explicitly states, we must continue the examination of innovative ways to improve the process of selecting and appointing the Secretary General, guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, including in the case where the incumbent SG should decide to run for re-election. Discussions during this session of the General Assembly come at a crucial time in this respect and we look forward to building on the advances of resolution 73/341.
7. More generally, the ACT Group remains committed towards strengthening the revitalization process and looks forward to working with all of you during the upcoming thematic sessions and interactive dialogues of the ad-hoc working group.

Mister President,

8. Over the last years, the General Assembly has taken significant steps to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the United Nations. However, the UN's financial situation is alarming and cash flow problems are getting worse. This situation not only affects the Secretariat's work of implementing the mandates entrusted to it by the General Assembly, but also the General Assembly's work itself. The Secretariat was forced to implement austerity measures, which limited the meeting hours and conference services for the committees of the General Assembly. Action to improve the financial situation is therefore urgently needed and we call upon all Members States to pay their contributions in full and on time.
9. The ACT Group is fully committed to continue to make a concrete contribution to strengthened multilateralism where the UN has a central role. We will build on the advances of this working group and, in the day-to-day work of the General Assembly and its bodies, continue to engage constructively in all relevant negotiations and discussions with the aim of promoting a more transparent, efficient and coherent United Nations.

I thank you, Mr President.