

**79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly – Item 121**

**Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) group statement, delivered by H.E.
Rein Tammsaar, Permanent Representative of Estonia to the UN**

4 November 2024, New York

President,

I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the 27 members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group¹.

Firstly, we would like to thank previous co-chairs of the AHWG on the Revitalization of the General Assembly Ambassador Cornel Feruță of Romania and Ambassador Menissa Rambally of Saint Lucia for their valuable work. We also would like to congratulate Ambassador Cornel Feruță of Romania and Ambassador Mathu Joyini of the Republic of South Africa, for their appointment as co-chairs for the 79th Session. ACT Group is keen to work with the co-chairs and all Member States towards a new resolution this session. And in this respect the group would like to outline a number of priorities.

President,

On the role and authority of the General Assembly we underscore that the **General Assembly has a clear role to play in the area of Peace and Security**. This is in line with Chapter IV of the Charter, and it is a role which includes taking action, as was recently reconfirmed by our leaders in the Pact of the Future. The Security Council's primary responsibility for issues of peace and security is not an exclusive one especially, as the ICJ has underlined, in cases of a casting of a **veto**.

As we have acknowledged also in recent texts, the **Emergency Special Session** and the **Veto Initiative** create opportunities and frameworks for action by the General Assembly in line with this responsibility.

We appreciate the organization of an **annual workshop on GA-Security Council relations** and the release of the "**Assembly for Peace**" **digital handbook**, which we hope you, Mr. President, will continue. These are valuable resources for assessing the GA's role and past practices in peace and security, and we encourage all Member States to make full use of them.

We are pleased that 2/3 of the UN Membership is now a signatory to the **ACT Code of Conduct** regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes and encourage others to join. Especially, given our common commitment in the Pact to "Support credible, timely and decisive action by the Security Council, in exercise of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to prevent or end the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes". We encourage the current

¹ Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Ireland, Jordan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Portugal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, and my own country Estonia.

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.

130 signatories to consistently adhere to their responsibilities, including those signatories on the Council, to work together to initiate relevant discussions and products.

We also encourage the GA to consider how it can **more closely coordinate with other bodies** relevant to the maintenance of peace and security, including the Peacebuilding Commission.

The ACT Group further highlights the importance of reflecting on the application of **Article 27(3)** of the UN Charter, which includes the obligation that members of the Security Council abstain from voting on decisions under Chapter VI and under paragraph 3 of Article 52 if they are a party to a dispute. Its clear intent is **to prevent any conflict party from acting as both a party and judge**. In the Pact for the Future we committed to “Fully implement and adhere to **all provisions of the Charter** of the United Nations as they relate to the decision-making process in the Security Council, including Article 27(3) of the Charter”. We believe that the General Assembly should play a role in ensuring observance of the Charter and look forward to working with all those with an interest in taking action to this end.

President,

The ACT Group will also continue to emphasize the importance of strengthening coordination between the General Assembly and the Security Council through the Security Council’s **Annual Report to the GA**.

We welcome this year’s informal consultations between the penholder of the **Annual Report** introduction and the GA and encourage its continuation. We also advocate for the timely submission of the report to allow for early consideration by the GA. In terms of content, we value the progress on veto discussions, especially with a dedicated chapter, and hope for a more comprehensive, substantive, and analytical approach in future reports. This could include further details, such as statistics and explanations of position, on draft resolutions that failed to pass in the Council. We believe the report should also capture insights from GA Emergency Special Sessions and debates held under the veto initiative, as these facilitate communication between the two bodies. We encourage the Office of the PGA to continue the practice of preparing a summary of the informal consultation and the GA debate on the annual report, for transmission to Member States and to the President of the Security Council.

Additionally, the ACT Group encourages the regular and timely compilation and use of **monthly assessments** by Council presidencies. These assessments are prepared under the prerogative of the monthly presidency, therefore we believe their content should avoid being diluted to the lowest common denominator. In the absence of a more analytical Annual Report, they are valuable sources of transparency and accountability to the broader membership.

President,

We have made important progress when it comes to the **selection and appointment process of the Secretary-General**, but let me stress that this progress must be built on, especially as we are fast approaching the next selection process, which would ideally begin less than a year from now:

- In this regard ACT underlines that we **need a clear and much more predictable timeline for the overall process**. This must be **addressed as priority in the 79th Session**. Agreeing on indicative timeframe for the process would ease procedural

burdens and improve clarity of the process for Member States, civil society, and candidates alike.

- We would also reiterate the primacy of the interactive hearings of the General Assembly with candidates, which are enriched by the full participation of civil society, as exemplified in the 70th session.
- Our previous resolution, and the Pact for the Future have also underscored the regrettable fact that there's never been a **women Secretary-General**. The resolution 77/335 also pointed out that there have been only four women elected as President of the General Assembly. ACT strongly encourages Member States to **nominate women candidates**. We cannot miss the transformative opportunity to appoint the UN's first woman SG and show our organisation's commitment to gender equality at the highest level.

The best practices established in the selection of the Secretary-General and full transparency should be also applied in the **selection and appointment of executive heads of the United Nations**, including the avoidance of monopolies by a handful of States on senior posts.

I thank you President.