

Statement of the Chairman at the conclusion of the 214th Session

Hon'ble Members,

Hon. Members, the 214th Session of Rajya Sabha comes to a close. I have directed the Secretary-General to make available statistical information regarding this Session. This has been a difficult year. The nation has faced unprecedented and heinous terrorist attacks. We also faced serious economic crisis, globally and nationally. 2008 would also go down in our Parliamentary history as the year when the House had its lowest number of annual sittings -- a mere 46 sittings for the calendar year. Yet, I am also grateful for the immense cooperation that I have received from hon. Members that has enabled the introduction of new initiatives for the smooth conduct of House proceedings, specially the three-minute rule for the Zero Hour.

Hon. Members, the *raison d'etre* of our existence is enacting legislation after due deliberation and ensuring the accountability of the Executive. While much legislative activity has taken place in this Session, the passing of important legislative business in the *din* does no credit to our Parliament. Apart from its inherent undesirability, the absence of parliamentary debate would not help future generations in ascertaining the legislative intent. The contrast with the debates of the Constituent Assembly and thereafter could not be starker. I thank the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, leaders of various parties and groups

and all the hon. Members for the cooperation extended by them in conducting the proceedings of the House. I also thank the Deputy Chairman, Members of the Panel of Vice-Chairmen and the officers and staff of the Secretariat for their help and cooperation. Before we adjourn, may I extend to all of you my greetings and good wishes for the forthcoming festivals and wish everyone a Happy New Year.