

28 October 2003

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Julian Robert Hunte,  
President of the 58th Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Civil Society Hearing on Financing for Development**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen,

As President of the General Assembly and Chair of the Civil Society Hearings which we now launch, I am deeply encouraged by the continuing interest and contribution of civil society in the critical matters addressed by the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico in March 2002. May I say how pleased I am by the participation of civil society representatives from around the world - I warmly greet you on this occasion.

At the FfD Conference, the global community made significant efforts to disentangle the knotty problem of development financing, so as to address the significant range of new and emerging challenges to development, particularly in the developing world. One and a half years after Monterrey and two days before the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, this Hearing provides an invaluable forum for review, from the civil society perspective, of the overall impact of Monterrey.

One commentator has said that duty is what we expect from others. If I might take the liberty of adjusting the commentator's observation, I would say that duty is more that our expectation of others - it is what we ourselves are prepared to do. Indeed, Civil Society organisations have been responsive to their duty in respect of Monterrey. They have proven their capacity to provide constructive inputs and expertise to, and have presented proposals for, the financing for development processes from the beginning.

We are all conversant with the action that the FfD Conference determined should be taken over a broad range of areas, by United Nations member states, the United Nations system, other intergovernmental and regional organisations and civil society to deliver the commitments made at Monterrey. From this perspective, the Conference was a beginning. The emphasis has now shifted, from making decisions to implementing those decisions. We have had more than one year to commence our implementation initiatives. These hearings will no doubt contribute to our overall evaluative process.

The first of your two panels today addresses the theme, "A Review of Progress and Setbacks since Monterrey". I very much appreciate the balance in this theme. For too often our enthusiasm to identify obstacles prevents us from reaching important conclusions about the progress we have made. For after all, we learn from setbacks, but we build on progress.

The theme of the second panel, "Strengthening the Role of the United Nations in Democratic Global Governance: Towards New Arrangements at the United Nations", touches on the important issue of United Nations revitalization and reform. This is currently a major preoccupation for member states and the United Nations system. What both panels conclude will be important to the work we are doing here at the United Nations, as we seek to move forward in accord with commitments made at Monterrey.

As you are aware, each Panel Session will have its Moderator, who will introduce the panellists, set the ground rules for the session and moderate the discussion. Each panel session will last for approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. Before I pass the floor to the Moderator of the first Panel Session, I wish to advise that my duties will shortly take me back to the Plenary, where I am presiding over an important debate on United Nations reform, including revitalization of the General Assembly, reform of the Security Council and other reform issues.

It is now my pleasure to call on the Moderator for the first Panel Session, Mr. Roberto Bissio, the Executive Director of Instituto del Tercer Mundo. Sir, I give you the floor, and ask that in turn, you turn over to the Moderator of the second Panel Session, Ms Emira Woods, Co-Director of Foreign Policy in Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies, whom I am pleased to recognise at this stage in the proceedings.

I wish you, Mr. Bissio and you, Ms. Woods and all participants successful and enriching Hearings.

I thank you.