

19 October 2007

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Meeting of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS**

Under-Secretary-General Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra,
Chairmen of the groups of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome this opportunity to meet with representatives from the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. I wish, to thank you, Mr. Under-Secretary-General for organizing this meeting, which enables me to address the crucial issue of sustainable development that affects your countries in such a particular, and often dramatic way.

Coming from a Landlocked Developing Country myself, the challenges faced by the countries you represent are very familiar to me, and therefore my resolve to work with you on these issues is strong.

Both development and the preservation of the environment are of greatest concern to the work of the General Assembly. The three groups of countries represented here today -- almost half of the Member States of the General Assembly -- are particularly exposed to economic and environmental challenges. The Assembly therefore adopted comprehensive programmes of action for each of these categories of countries. -- the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs in 2001, the Almaty Programme of Action for the LLDCs in 2003, and the Mauritius Strategy for the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS in 2005. Each programme addresses the cross-cutting priority issues that uniquely challenge each group.

As you are all well aware, I have identified Climate Change and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as priorities for this session of the General Assembly. The two issues are closely intertwined, and they are also central pillars of the three programmes of action.

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Le développement sera durable, ou ne sera pas. Comme vous le savez, j'ai fait du changement climatique le fer de lance de ma Présidence. Le défi climatique est autant un défi au développement qu'un défi à la planète. C'est la raison pour laquelle j'ai décidé d'organiser un panel thématique qui rassemblera tous les acteurs concernés sur ce thème, au début de l'année prochaine. Car si nous ne nous donnons pas les moyens de prévenir et de nous adapter aux

changements climatiques, nous ne serons pas en mesure d'atteindre les Objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement. Or les pays que vous représentez aujourd'hui sont parmi les plus vulnérables aux catastrophes climatiques qui nous affectent, qu'elles soient brutales, comme les tornades ou les vagues de sécheresses – ou qu'elles s'inscrivent dans la durée, telles la montée des eaux ou la désertification. C'est la raison pour laquelle je m'engage à prêter une attention particulière à la condition des groupes d'Etats que vous représentez dans les mois à venir, qui seront riches d'évènements dans le calendrier climatique.

On the MDGs, I have expressed to Member States my concern that several sub-Saharan African countries, most of whom are LDCs or LLDCs, are not on target to attain any of the MDGs. At the mid-point for attainment of the goals by 2015, I would like to focus the General Assembly's attention on review of the progress in implementation of the MDGs, to recommitting efforts and resources to reach the agreed targets, and to build consensus for urgent collective action. The overarching goal of the Brussels Programme of Action is to achieve the first MDG; to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. This programme of action aims to achieve this goal through partnership and mutual commitments from LDCs and their development partners. To the extent therefore that the General Assembly can work to make progress on the MDGs during this session, it would at the same time make progress on implementing of the Brussels Programme of Action.

Excellencies,

The issues of greatest concern for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are priorities for the 62nd Session of the General Assembly. I intend to work in an inclusive and transparent manner to address these issues. I very much look forward to your active support, assistance and advice in advancing these issues, as well as other issues on the agenda of the General Assembly including UN reform.

Let us work together to create a new climate of mutual trust and cooperation which would strengthen our ability to make meaningful and prompt progress on all of these issues. We must act with purpose, determination and vision: all of us accepting our shared, but differentiated responsibilities.

By doing so, we can nurture a new culture of international relations based on international solidarity and tolerance, equality and freedom, respect for nature and a collective responsibility for economic and social development, and international peace and security.

I thank you.