

4 June 2008

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Election of the 63rd President of the General Assembly**

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

May I offer His Excellency Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann my congratulations upon his election to the Presidency of the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

This high-profile position offers both the Republic of Nicaragua – a founder member of the United Nations – and GRULAC an important opportunity to strengthen the role of the General Assembly and promote the three pillars of the United Nations: development, peace and security and human rights.

Having been Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua for more than 10 years, His Excellency can draw upon a vast political and diplomatic experience, at both the national and international level, during the next session.

Throughout his life, Mr. D'Escoto has worked with great dedication to help people living in poverty, to overcome social injustice and by assisting in the aftermath of several natural catastrophes. For this work he has received numerous national and international awards. I am sure that his first-hand experience and insights will be of great help while leading the Assembly's work in addressing the great challenges of our days, in particular, to drive forward the United Nations development agenda.

Furthermore, as a scholar of communications I am sure that Your Excellency will be able to build bridges of trust, where they are needed, and reach out in the language of compromises to achieve results on the many important topics that this Assembly will consider.

I am confident that given these experiences and skills Your Excellency will be able to successfully discharge your duties and responsibilities to this Assembly and continue efforts to foster a climate of mutual trust and flexibility among Member States.

Excellencies, Mr. President-elect,

We are facing a genuine challenge in our efforts to make the UN more relevant and to raise its authority. The priority issues of our times demand a United Nations that is able to rise to the challenges posed by the food crisis, climate change, global terrorism and flagrant abuses of human rights.

That is why the broader United Nations reform agenda, including, prioritizing our mandates, strengthening management, improving coherence and accountability, remains so critical to the credibility of this organization.

Experience demonstrates that when Member States engage substantively in the priority issues, that the Assembly becomes stronger and more effective; and, that we are better able to live up to the high expectations that the global public demands from the true parliament of nations.

Continuity of the work of the General Assembly is also an essential part of the process of boosting the relevance, credibility and standing our resolutions, decisions and deliberations. I therefore encourage Your Excellency to draw upon the experience and support of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, as well as, the various Co-Chairs and facilitators.

There are a number of ongoing initiatives and consultations processes that will require your close attention upon taking office. At the beginning of the 63rd session there are two very important High-level events which will take place on Africa's development needs and the Millennium Development Goals, and, ongoing preparations leading to the Financing for Development Review Conference in Doha at the end of the year.

I am confident that during the transition period Member States will work supportively and constructively while Your Excellency conducts consultations to set up the forthcoming program of work and the priorities for the next session. My office and I also stand ready to ensure a smooth transition and successful beginning to the 63rd session.

Before closing Mr. President-Elect, I would like to switch to Spanish.

Por experiencia, sé que contar con el apoyo de todos los miembros de la Asamblea General es realmente un privilegio, pero esto también entraña la gran responsabilidad de balancear intereses opuestos y forjar el consenso. Sobretudo, entraña la responsabilidad de ayudar a los Estados Miembros a ser la fuerza motriz de los trabajos de la Asamblea.

Quisiera desearle éxito y suerte mientras prosigue la labor de la Asamblea General en su sexagésimo tercer período de sesiones.

Es un gran placer para mí invitar al Excelentísimo Señor D'Escoto a hacer uso de la palabra.

Gracias.