

26 September 2008

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Thirty-second Annual Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
of the Group of 77**

Excellencies,
Dear Friends,
Sisters and Brothers,

I am very pleased to be able to briefly address this meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China at this early point in 63rd Assembly. We come together at the end of a long week during which two very important high-level meetings highlighted themes at the heart of the G77 and the Assembly's common agendas. It was gratifying that our meetings on the Special Needs of Africa and the Millennium Development Goals have become the undisputed centerpieces of this Assembly.

These meetings provided the opportunity for Member States to reaffirm their commitments to our beloved Africa and to the campaign against extreme poverty. We have received assurances that promises will be kept and the upcoming meeting in Doha will be crucial on how the aid pledged can be the most effective.

I wish to assure you, as representatives of many countries where donor assistance is essential to your national efforts to meet the MDGS, this General Assembly will follow through on monitoring the implementation of these commitments. And count on me as President to do everything in my power to facilitate a successful meeting in Doha in November – and to ensure further follow-up.

We all know the bitter experience of high expectations and low delivery. This is why I emphasize the need for a renewed sense of solidarity with our brothers and sisters, to strengthen our resolve and to give a sense of urgency to our work. I am appealing to all Member States to overcome the narrow self-interests that have long crippled the UN in its efforts to bring about economic and social development, and peace and security for all citizens of the world.

My appeal is based on ethical principles that we all share. It is inspired by compassion and recognition that those less fortunate are also our brothers and sisters. And it is based on the hard-headed reality that our planet, indeed our own species are at risk by unconstrained patterns of consumption that deplete our natural resources and separate us from our fellows and nature.

Today we must be vigilant that the threat of global recession not be used as pretext for breaking promises. We must use all the means available to us to prevent backsliding.

Moreover, even if each and all meet their commitments, the MDGs goals mark only a beginning. We must insist on long-term reallocation of resources to national priorities, the stepped-up transfer of technologies, reduction of agricultural subsidies and the opening of markets, all of which require significant resources and commitments from our partners in the North. We must garner the strong sentiments of solidarity to encourage our partners to come through on the delivery of resources.

Today, Dear Friends, I urge all of us here to work diligently to ensure that the Doha Review Conference significantly enhances our global partnership for development. Our concerted efforts will be crucial during the months leading up to and following Doha. We must not hesitate. We must take the lead.

If we truly wish to take the lead in our own development efforts, we must begin to transform an international economic system that affords some and denies others the benefits of development.

This great democratic forum must provide compelling leadership to guide processes to develop and implement economic and social policies that truly help the dispossessed of our world.

In this task, I look forward to working with all of you. Billions are looking to us to place people-centered development at the center of our concerted global action. We have the opportunity and we have the forum. We must show our brothers and sisters, and even the skeptics, that solidarity is indeed the greatest single force for promoting life with dignity for all. Let us take the lead in making this our common agenda.

Thank you.