

3 October 2008

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,  
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Closing of the High Level Plenary Meeting on the Midterm Review of the  
Almaty Programme of Action**

Excellencies,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Friends all,

I am very pleased that we have concluded this high-level plenary meeting on the mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action. As President, I am particularly gratified that this review takes place within the General Assembly framework.

Over the past two days we have been assessing the multi-faceted efforts to ensure that landlocked developing countries have efficient transit transport systems to access international markets. We have adopted the Declaration on the Midterm Review by acclamation. It is a balanced and precise document that provides the guidance that will enhance the rate of implementation of further projects. We all commend His Excellency Yukio Takasu of Japan for his tireless work in facilitating this final document.

Our focus on action-oriented programmes that are both measurable and feasible has grounded this review in terms that will benefit landlocked and transit countries alike. It also serves to inspire greater donor involvement in the range of needed improvements, from trade assistance policy to infrastructure, from technical and financial assistance to monitoring and follow-up.

In particular, the high-level panel on the role of international support for the development of transport systems to enhance trade opportunities provided a dynamic exchange on these complex issues. Stakeholder representatives from landlocked and transit countries, donor countries and regional and international organizations as well as financial institutions provided insights into the key partnerships that are emerging from the Programme of Action. We thank you all for your valuable inputs. We now have a clear assessment of where we stand after five years of work.

The United Nations is all about partnerships. I believe that the work orchestrated by the Almaty Programme of Action is a good example of what we can accomplish when we are guided by clear directives and strong leadership within the context of good-faith cooperation. Clearly, a key element in the success of this review is its emphasis on measurable results and the importance of monitoring progress within the five stated priorities of the Programme.

As the leaders of so many Member States said during the General Debate in recent weeks, there is concern that the current financial crisis threatens to cripple world trade. A global recession would be doubly catastrophic for the least developed countries that are not only poor, but geographically isolated as well.

I reiterate my concern and my promise that the General Assembly will use all its authority to ensure that the commitments of Donor Countries to provide funding and needed technology transfers are honored. I believe there is good will, but we must be vigilant as we monitor progress in the difficult months and years ahead.

If the United Nations is all about partnerships, then let us recognize the central role of solidarity in assisting each other as partners and as countries. We face so many obstacles to realizing the shared goal of ending poverty and sharing prosperity among peoples. The work outlined in the Almaty Review document is ambitious. But inspired by our sense of solidarity with the peoples of these landlocked countries and their neighbours, the way is clear and the possibilities endless.

Thank you.