

23 October 2008

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
at the United Nations Day Concert**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Ambassador Zhang Yesui,
Excellencies,
Dear Friends,

I am honoured to read the message of H.E. Father Miguel d'Escoto, President of the 63rd session of the General Assembly. With great regret, Father Miguel is unable to join us this evening, as he is traveling. His message reads:

I wish I could join you tonight. In these stressful and disturbing times, I certainly would enjoy an evening with Yo-Yo Ma and draw inspiration from the music of the Silk Road Project.

This is a very special way to celebrate the day that the Charter of the United Nations came into force. Yo-Yo Ma is known to the world as a virtuoso cellist. It is less known that he is a Good Will Ambassador for the United Nations. He is a man who, through his wonderful music, is able to convey to us the values of the United Nations and inspire our commitment to them. Compassion, cooperation and communication, strength through diversity - these are some of the values that seem to be absent or inconsequential in international relations, yet these values should underpin all the undertakings of our great Organization.

Let us tonight reflect on the immense possibilities open to us despite these difficult times. Let us dream a bit. Let us think of the Silk Road musicians as a kind of general assembly. Twelve members instead of 192. Musicians from diverse backgrounds and countries, coming together, transcending their differences and embracing the universal language of music. As professionals and artists they put aside their jealousies and private agendas and together combine their talents to produce music of great beauty and inspiration.

Is such cooperation and collaboration for the benefit of everyone so impossible to replicate here in this hall?

I believe the people of the world yearn for such inspiration and collaboration. They want to be moved and to hear melody. Even today, after so many disappointments and bitter betrayals, billions of people still look to the United Nations with trust and expectations. They have entrusted the United Nations with our common future. Who are we to betray this sacred trust?

As the President of the 63rd session of the General Assembly, I sometimes wish I could take on the role of conductor of this body, the truly global orchestra. That cannot be, of course. But a bit of coordination, bringing people together, listening to diverse voices – we can attempt to create some harmony out of so many discordant notes. These are challenges I embrace. Tonight, let us be inspired by beauty and the endless possibilities of our combined human talents.