

10 December 2008

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
at the Closing of the Inter-Active Panel to Commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of
the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Representatives of United Nations organizations and entities,
Representatives of non-governmental organizations,
Brothers and Sisters,

Over the past few hours, we have heard the voices, views, exhortations, appeals and proposals of representatives of Member States, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations. You have all called for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to continue to be the guide for the standardization or codification of new laws. As history moves forward and the human conscience evolves, organizations, communities and peoples now urgently demand that their human rights be recognized. We thank you for your compelling presentations.

We will still view human rights as a subject of academic and legal discourse. But now we must, once and for all, convert these rights into practice as the universal values that guide the formulation and implementation of economic and social policies. This ensures that these policies will enable all human beings, regardless of their social, political, cultural or ethnic background, their age or any other condition, to enjoy the highest standards and quality of life.

We should continue to treat human rights as an indissoluble whole, with no hierarchy of status, given the importance of all them. Economic, social, political, cultural and environmental rights should be implemented simultaneously everywhere.

We, the United Nations, should make an exhaustive, fair and thorough review of the level of implementation of the agreements, covenants, declarations and action plans in the field of human rights; States should allocate more economic resources and strengthen their political will in order to achieve the full and effective enjoyment of human rights in all nations.

Let us continue to enhance all national and international mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights, such as Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteurs and the treaty bodies and the Ombudsmen, among others.

We should recognize that the right to water is a human right, and water cannot therefore be treated as a commodity that is bought and sold. The right to water should unite us in building a new model of sustainable human development.

The twenty-first century should be declared “The Century for Human Rights”. On that basis, we could put an end to economic dictatorships, ideological forms of colonialism, all forms of gender-based and social violence, and discrimination on the grounds of culture, ethnicity, gender and age. We must unequivocally respect the human rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, older people, indigenous people and those of African descent, migrants and their families and other human groups.

Let human rights be our guide, from an ethical perspective, in building a new economic order. The challenge is to humanize our economic system in order to avert total chaos; let us do away with the irrationality of egoism and consumerism, and build an inclusive global society that treats our Mother Earth with respect; one that is equitable, mutually supportive and just; and one that honours human dignity and is based on a system of political, economic and social democracy.

Thank you very much.