

23 December 2008

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,  
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,  
on the Work to Date of the Sixty-Third Session of the United Nations General  
Assembly**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Brothers and Sisters,

I am very pleased to close this year's work with a very brief report on the work of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly to date. This is the final plenary meeting of the main part of this session of the General Assembly. It has been an honour for me to preside over this busy, dynamic and constructive period of work.

At the beginning of the current session we defined the priorities of the sixty-third session; we have been implementing them over the past three months.

Indeed, the session started as usual in the second half of September with the general debate which, this year, was attended by more Heads of State and Government than in recent years.

The General Assembly also held a meeting on the special needs of Africa, which gave African countries the opportunity to draw attention to what they really need and not to what others think they need. The Assembly also convened a high-level meeting devoted to the Millennium Development Goals and to the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

In view of the fact that the food and energy crises have been compounded by the ongoing serious financial crisis, the General Assembly organized an interactive round table discussion on the topic in which renown experts shared their views with Member States.

On the issue of a culture of peace, the General Assembly held a high-level meeting on interfaith dialogue which was attended, inter alia, by Heads of State and Government. This event highlighted the importance of global values to foster genuine solidarity among peoples that transcends differences in religious beliefs and ethical and philosophical traditions.

The Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus was held in Doha. The Declaration adopted at the end of the Conference charges the most representative group, the G-192, i.e. the General Assembly, with the governance of international finance. That decision is crucial and it is the duty of this plenary body to endorse and implement it, especially given the current international economic and financial meltdown in the wake

of the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system. Furthermore, in Doha I announced the establishment of an 18-member Commission of Experts of the President of the United Nations General Assembly on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System to review the workings of the global financial system. This comprehensive review will include bodies such as the World Bank and IMF, and suggest steps to be taken by Member States to secure a more stable, sustainable and just global economic order.

The General Assembly celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on which occasion prizes were awarded to prominent human rights advocates and defenders from various parts of the world. As well, two interactive panels were organized featuring prominent persons in the field of human rights; and a declaration recognizing the progressive nature of human rights as well as an Optional Protocol on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which strengthened the enjoyment of collective human rights, were adopted.

You will recall that, at its sixty-second session, the General Assembly failed to reach consensus on the election of members to the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and therefore extended until 31 December 2008 the term of office of the members of the Assembly - Burundi, Chile, Egypt, El Salvador and Fiji - on the Organizational Committee of the Commission. At this sixty-third session, a consensus has emerged among the five regional groups regarding the election by the General Assembly of members to the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission; the Presidents of ECOSOC (Haiti) and the Security Council (Croatia) have also been authorized to conduct consultations on that matter with representative of troop-contributing countries. It was further agreed that the term of office of the members of the General Assembly on the PBC Organizational Committee would begin in January 2009.

On Security Council reforms, we had moved forward on the basis of GA decision 62/557, which, as I said, I intend to implement in letter and spirit. This means giving to the Open Ended Working Group the time and space it needs until February 2009 to pave the way towards the intergovernmental negotiations. I am grateful to this Excellency, Mr. Zahir Tanin, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan and one of the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly, for the considerable support he has been giving me, conducting the delicate relevant consultations on my behalf. I seek the cooperation and assistance of all of you in this important endeavour and look forward to receiving the results of the consultations.

In addition to the work of the General Assembly proper, we have organized various side events relating to commemorations to which our Organization has given its firm support.

With a view to coordinating efforts, I have met, inter alia, with the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and Security Council, the Chairmen of the main committees, the coordinators of the different regional groups as well as with politicians from Member States.

The Secretary-General and I see eye to eye on all that needs to be done to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We have agreed a comprehensive preparatory process and I also invite Members

to set out strategic development priorities to make it possible to achieve and even to exceed the goals set.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and his staff for their support and cooperation. I would also like to thank Conference Management officials, whose work behind the scenes ensures that the General Assembly operates smoothly.

My special thanks goes to the facilitators/co-chairs, whose diligence, dedication and goodwill have produced positive results in all that they undertook.

Let us use the holidays to recharge our batteries and return in 2009 with renewed vigour. We cannot afford to rest on our laurels after this intensive period. Indeed, we have a busy schedule ahead and there are many important issues that call for dedication and diligence from all of us.

I wish you all very happy holidays.

Thank you.