

20 February 2009

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,
on the First World Day of Social Justice**

I am very pleased to share with you my thoughts and best wishes on the launch of this first World Day of Social Justice, which was proclaimed by the General Assembly last year. I regret that I am unable to join you, Sisters and Brothers of the NGO community working with the United Nations, to highlight the advancement of social justice, a concept that underlies all our work. Like many of you, my entire career and vocation have been devoted to the advancement of social justice and the inclusion of the socially marginalized. These remain the priorities of my tenure here during the 63rd session of the General Assembly.

These are trying times for the world, especially for the hundreds of millions of marginalized people who live in poverty and isolation. Last month we were witness to the violence against the most afflicted members of our world community, the Palestinian people in Gaza. This violence underscores once again the central role that social and political justice play in our lives. We are reminded that social development, integration and social justice cannot be attained in the absence of peace, security or respect for all human rights. We are all affected by the consequences of injustice.

On a global scale, the ultimate injustice of hunger, poverty and early death is growing before our eyes. Each day, millions of the marginally poor are tipping into extreme poverty due to the global financial meltdown, unemployment and even scarcity of food. And the world's poor already know first hand the catastrophes that climate change has in store for all of us. We see the promise of the Millennium Development Goals, a key tool to promote social justice, threatened to be deferred indefinitely.

As we launch the First World Day of Social Justice, we continue our efforts to bring the poor, the people with disabilities, older persons, disaffected youth and abused women and minorities into the mainstream of our communities and our societies. We need to think and act on a global scale as well. I believe that such integration and justice require that we recast the global financial architecture in such a way that the marginalized have full access to the economic and social system locally and internationally. We need policy making that recognizes their human rights as full members of society. We need a financial system that includes those countries that are being excluded and meets the needs and demands not only of the G8 and the G20, but the entire G192 UN Members States.

As you may know, the General Assembly, with the help of its Presidential Commission of Experts on reforms of the international financial, economic, trade and monetary system, recently began its work to explore new ways to ensure the integration of developing countries into a more fair and responsive international financial framework. Our aim is to bring the United Nations into the discussion about

policy changes needed in the failed financial architecture. We must help to ensure that the needed new order reflects a more just and equitable system, one in which the marginalized participate and benefit.

The World Day of Social Justice provides us with opportunities for Member States, civil society organizations and individuals around the world to take concrete steps to promote awareness of social justice. I encourage all Member States to raise awareness of the principles of equity, democracy, participation, transparency accountability and inclusion that provide the underpinnings of social justice.

But the strongest forces for social justice remain within us as individuals, families and communities. We too need the inspiration to take the lead in promoting these essential values in our societies. Leadership is crucial, so let us all become leaders and advocates for a more just world -- one imbued with respect for the inherent dignity due everyone.

Thank you.