

20 April 2009

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,  
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,  
to the Durban Review Conference**

Excellencies,  
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Honourable Officials of the United Nations,  
Brothers and Sisters,

I have the honour to bring you warm greetings from the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Father Miguel d'Escoto, as well as his thanks to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, for having invited us to reaffirm our commitment to the fight against racism and discrimination.

"We the peoples of the United Nations determined (...) to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, (...) to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, (...) have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims" (Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations).

More than 60 years after the creation of the United Nations, a few months after commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, eight years after the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, in the International Year of Reconciliation, and plunged into one of the gravest crises in history, here we are the peoples of the world, resolved and determined that the Durban Review Conference should mark a genuinely transcendent milestone in this watershed period of human history.

Our societies continue to experience traditional and new forms of discrimination that were explicitly denounced at the 2001 Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

The President of the United Nations General Assembly takes this opportunity to commend those States that have already taken measures to guarantee the rights of victims of racism, racial discrimination and related intolerance through reparations or actions to provide just and adequate compensation and invites all others to follow their example by seeking appropriate ways to achieve these ends.

At the same time, he invites you to reaffirm, as was done at the 2001 Conference, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State and to

recognize the right to security of all States in the region, and calls on all States to support the peace process and bring it to an early conclusion.

Today, as was the case eight years ago, we can justifiably assert that racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance may be increasing because of, among other things, the inequitable distribution of wealth and the phenomena of marginalization and social exclusion.

On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda, the President of the General Assembly, Miguel D'Escoto declared that if the injustices inherent in our economic and social systems are not redressed, there is no doubt that we will continue to reap the fruits of death and destruction whose seeds we have sown.

Continuing, he added that these crimes do not flower by magic. The seeds of genocide were planted long before and germinated with deadly results because of colonial policies that institutionalized resentments and ethnic tensions.

The most terrible experiences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance have their roots in models and projects of economic, social and political development that have imposed the anti-values of greed, selfishness and domination instead of the values of human rights, equality of persons, solidarity and justice.

It should be noted that the major crises facing mankind today have arisen from the same sources that bred racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related forms of intolerance and may bring about new and more terrible forms of discrimination.

And so, the event that we are inaugurating today must be at the same time a review and an updating, in the current global situation that is characterized by new and terrible threats of financial, economic, food, climate, environment and energy discrimination.

The President of the United Nations General Assembly maintains that it is urgently necessary to return to the same values that made it possible to reach the most transcendent global agreement that the world has known in recent centuries, namely, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In these times, values and ethics are a choice not only of principles but also of the most elemental realism.

The event that we are inaugurating today is closely linked to the search for effective solutions to the challenges of the four major crises that threaten to create a new and gigantic apartheid.

On more than one occasion, the President of the United Nations General Assembly has affirmed that there is broad agreement among world leaders that the current crisis has its roots in ethical failures, the same failures that engender racism and discrimination.

The United Nations General Assembly has decided to invite the 192 States Members to a world summit on the global crisis on 1 - 3 June of this year. In order for it to be effective, the summit must have the presence at the highest level of Heads of State and Government.

President Miguel d'Escoto is convinced that the forum of 192 Member States offers at this time the conditions of representativity, legitimacy and credibility necessary to undertake an in-depth review of the current crisis and to develop a viable and effective proposal for a new and necessary international financial architecture in which all countries have an opportunity to participate fully and equitably in the common search for solutions for all countries both large and small.

Thank you very much.