

5-7 August 2009

**Statement of Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,  
President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Global Model UN Conference**

I am pleased to have the opportunity to share some thoughts about your upcoming Global Model UN Conference. I congratulate you for being selected to participate in this remarkable global event. Your participation reflects both your dedication and your skills, and we are honoured that you have given so much of your time to learn about the United Nations and how we work.

You are gathering in Geneva when the world is facing an extraordinary confluence of global crises that affect our very survival here on Mother Earth. I am a firm believer that the United Nations and the 192 countries that make up the General Assembly have a key role to play in finding the solutions for the challenges we face. I believe that only a truly democratic United Nations, representing the concerns and interests of all peoples, will enable us to transcend our purely national interests and focus on the global good. You are learning how difficult these challenges are and how rewarding working together to solve our common problems can be.

When I was your age, we had no awareness of the damage we were doing to our planet. We were optimistic. We were confident that we would eradicate poverty and ignorance within our lifetimes. I must say: We owe you an apology.

You are inheriting a world that has been shamelessly neglected. We have allowed unbridled selfishness to direct our lives and our decisions as nations. Rather than recognizing the fundamental truth that we are all sisters and brothers, we have instead put our own narrow self interests first. Now our environment is under siege and our economies are in disarray. We are unable to meet the needs of the majority of people on the planet.

Our recent prosperity has become a mad rush of consumerism and indulgence. Rather than being stewards of our environment, we have become ruthless landlords, seeking profit and domination at any cost. And now, more than any time since the Great Depression of the 1930s, we are witnessing the breakdown of an economic system and values that have for so long been accepted as the best way to organize our societies. We are now witness to the glaring failures and astounding excesses of this system. I think the bankruptcy of our banks and corporations reveal a moral bankruptcy that we must address as well.

We are living in a transformative moment for humankind. Most of us see that we cannot live in good conscience knowing that our affluence and privilege are sustained by the daily and systemic violation of the rights of billions to clean water, to education, to jobs, to security and dignity. You know that this is unsustainable. Now it falls to you to come up with humane alternatives to these failed paradigms.

I am old now, but I still have a burning faith in humanity. I have dedicated my presidency to the poor and oppressed of world, who look to the United Nations, to all of us, for solidarity. I appeal to you as young people, who almost instinctively know what is wrong with the world, to take this opportunity to grapple with these challenges and these moral and ethical dilemmas through the Model UN experience. As you recreate the work of the General Assembly committees and the debates within the Security Council and the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council, please keep in mind the fundamental truth that should trump your considerations as delegates of sovereign nations: We are all brothers and sisters. As such, we must take actions and implement policies that ensure that the interests and concerns of all nations, all peoples and all individuals are respected.

We must reaffirm as well our commitment to democracy at all levels of public life. We must assure that our governments and the United Nations truly promote justice and dignity, fair trade, sustainable development and the search for peace among nations and among peoples. I appeal to you to bring your passion and your energy to the service of our planet and the precious life it sustains. It is a lot to ask, but we are counting on you.