

22 September 2009

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
At the United Nations Leadership Forum on Climate Change**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies Heads of State and Government
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour for me to address this Summit. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his timely initiative to convene today's meeting.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing our shared planet. Its devastating consequences threaten us all. Only through an inclusive and legitimate forum that consists of all the countries of the world - rich and poor, from North and South - can we effectively deal with this extremely pressing issue. Only through a united approach can we truly aspire to combat climate change.

The world needs a new international agreement on climate change. The Copenhagen Summit in December offers the opportunity to agree on a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, and we, the Member States of the United Nations, need to show resolve in reaching this goal. We need to come together over an agreement that is fair, effective and ambitious. One that reflects our shared goal and our common but differentiated responsibilities.

Excellencies

Climate change is not a concern for the distant future. People are suffering from its terrible consequences as we speak. It is happening, and it is happening faster than previously assumed.

Unfortunately the poor, who are least responsible for the problem of climate change, often suffer first and the most from its impact.

In sub-Saharan Africa, in the deltas of Asia or among the Pacific Islands and elsewhere, climate changes such as rising sea levels, floods, droughts, hurricanes and other changed weather patterns are threatening not only hard-won progress in the battle against poverty, but the existence of entire nations.

Excellencies

We all know that addressing the threats posed by climate change will be expensive, but we also know that we will pay a much higher price if we fail to act now.

What is needed to overcome this enormous challenge is political will and leadership that transcend short-term economic interests and the day-to-day struggles of international politics.

This Summit is crucial in providing the political impetus for the success in Copenhagen. For that, all Member States have to shoulder responsibility consistent with their capabilities. And as the old proverb goes, the broadest shoulders must bear the heaviest burdens. But no one can afford to dodge this issue or go it alone. The world is looking to this gathering to take responsibility and to show leadership to move the process forward.

As President of the General Assembly, I will make sure that this world body plays its due role.

Thank you.