

29 September 2009

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
At the Closing of the General Debate**

Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

The General Debate of the General Assembly has now concluded. On behalf of the Assembly, I thank all the distinguished speakers for their contributions. I have listened carefully to your views and your suggestions. The breadth of your vision and the passion with which you hold your convictions are a true testimony to the importance of this universal body.

As the main theme for this debate, I had suggested that we reflect on “*Effective responses to global crises – strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development*”. I am glad that this topic has catalyzed important policy discussion. Throughout our debate we have heard a clear call for dialogue, and a willingness to act together. It is evident that the greatest challenges facing us today span the entire globe and cannot be solved by one country, a small group or one region alone. Our increasing inter-dependence calls for concerted and united responses to these challenges based on common understanding, enhanced international cooperation and shared responsibilities. I welcome a new era of engagement based on mutual interests and mutual respect and a more just and democratic world order with equal participation of sovereign Member States. The vision of nations uniting to face common challenges is at the core of the United Nations. I am heartened that inside this hall, as well as outside, in the various meetings and events on the sidelines, there was a renewed commitment to promoting effective and inclusive multilateralism.

I shall work with all Member States to advance this objective. In this process we would need to ensure full participation and ownership and take into account the interests especially of the developing world which comprises the large majority of small and medium States. There were also clear calls to promote greater coherence and understanding among regional and political groupings as well as dialogue among faiths, cultures and civilizations. I believe that we need to adopt this path in order to fully tap the opportunities that present themselves to address the global challenges collectively and more effectively. The General Assembly is uniquely placed to synergize our efforts in that regard and to forge collective strategies for the common good.

There is a widely shared concern about the impact of climate change on our planet and our present and future generations. We have heard powerful testimonies from Small Island States whose very survival

is threatened. But no country will be spared the impact of climate change. Climate change is a growing global threat which will have consequences for the global economy, health and safety, food production, peace and security and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. The poorest nations, which often contribute the least to the phenomenon, are the most vulnerable to climate change.

There is a readiness by Member States to agree on a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and to make the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen a success. We must now maintain this momentum.

I have heard calls for more collective actions to prevent conflicts and settle disputes that threaten international peace and security. In some areas we have taken small but concrete steps towards sustainable political solutions, as in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia and Timor-Leste, but still much more needs to be done, particularly in Africa including in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I have also noted your concerns about unresolved conflicts that require our urgent attention.

Of utmost concern to the international community is the situation in the Middle East, particularly the longstanding issue of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The situation is unsustainable particularly the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. I am encouraged by the efforts of the President of the United States to promote a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict in the Middle East. This entails full backing of the international community and a more effective role of the United Nations.

The UN has a unique legitimacy to play an active role in international peace and security. There has been broad support for the United Nations role in peacekeeping, peace-building, conflict prevention, mediation, and protection of civilians.

Disarmament remains a clear priority for Member States. There is also widely shared concern about the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, as a threat to international peace and security. We have heard passionate calls for a world free of nuclear arms. I am encouraged by the willingness of Member States to engage constructively with the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Let us all work together to ensure equal security for all.

Member States were unanimous in their view that peace and security was intricately linked to sustainable development. There is broad agreement on the need for collective response to the unprecedented global financial crisis. People in developing countries have been hit particularly hard by the financial and economic crisis, which has exacerbated unemployment, poverty, hunger and insecurity. I have noted your suggestions for strengthening the international economic system, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, with a view to making them more inclusive, transparent and democratic in their decision making.

We will continue the follow-up to the High-Level Conference on the Economic and Financial Crisis and Its Impact on Development. We must not allow the Millennium Development Goals to become the prime victim of the financial crisis. As was rightly noted, at the current rate it would take more than

100 years to achieve the MDGs. Drastic measures are therefore needed. Next year, the tenth anniversary of the Millennium Declaration, will provide us with the opportunity to reinvigorate the global partnership to make the MDG's a reality. I look forward to your cooperation and support for the success of the September 2010 high level event.

Some five years after 2005 World Summit, our joint endeavor to reform the United Nations continues. I have heard urgent calls for reforming the Security Council comprehensively – making it more representative, democratic, open and hence more legitimate. Many of you have also emphasized the need to begin the review of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, and to continue the process of Revitalizing the General Assembly. We shall pursue all these objectives together.

Through multilateralism and dialogue, we can collectively achieve all these goals. We will need to work efficiently, with civility, discipline and a readiness to compromise for the greater good. I want to assure you that I intend to conduct this work with transparency, fairness and respect for the General Assembly's central and crucial role in the United Nations.

I look forward to working with you all in this spirit as we face our common challenges.