

29 September 2009

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
At the International Conference of New and Restored Democracies
(ICNRD) Ministerial Meeting**

Excellencies,
Members of Parliament,
Distinguished Delegates,

It gives me great pleasure to speak to the International Conference of New and Restored Democracies Ministerial Meeting at the opening of the sixty-fourth General Assembly here in New York.

Democracy is at the core of the United Nations. I have been elected to preside over a model of democracy among nations. Here, all the 192 Member States are sovereign and equal, regardless of their size or power. Each Member State has one vote to decide on all important issues of the United Nations.

Democracy is also at the core of the United Nations Charter, which speaks of “human rights” and “fundamental freedoms”, “the equal rights of women and men”, “life in larger freedom” and “self-determination”. These democratic values have guided the work of the United Nations since its foundation. These democratic values have also guided many Member States from foreign rule to national self-determination. At the 2005 World Summit, all Member States reaffirmed “that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people”. As a universal value, democracy does not belong to any one country or region, but is shared by all who seek to improve the quality of life of their citizens – for that is the essence of democracy. Based on the rule of law, democracy is the road to achieve peace and security, economic and social progress and development, and respect for human rights, the three pillars of the United Nations.

The United Nations has a unique role to play in supporting democracy. At their request, the United Nations helps Member States holding elections build state institutions. While there is no one model for democracy, the UN seeks to promote sustainable democracy that builds local capacity and nurtures a democratic culture.

Your meeting here today at the opening of the sixty-fourth General Assembly testifies to the close cooperation between the United Nations and the International Conference of New and Restored Democracies. I am encouraged by the active involvement of parliamentarians from all over the world and by the contribution from civil society. We have included in the provisional agenda for the sixty-fourth General Assembly an item on “Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of

Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". Our meeting today will provide an important input to the debate of the General Assembly.

Thank you.