

8 October 2009

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,  
President of the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
On the International Day of Older Persons**

Observance of the 19th International Day of Older Persons is an occasion both for celebration and for serious reflection. It is an occasion to celebrate the older persons' achievements and contributions to society. At the same time, many issues related to the quality of their lives, such as the eradication of poverty, provision of adequate health care, integration in society, participation in decision making, access to information, remain to be fully addressed. And we need to do a lot more to achieve the objectives of the International Year adopted by the General Assembly in 1991 to promote the United Nations Principles for Older Persons, namely, independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity.

The motto "Towards a society for all ages", chosen in 1991, again in 2002 during the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, and which is once more the focus of this year's celebration, underlines the cross generational impacts of the challenges faced by the older persons. Our societies should invest more in infrastructure and resources needed to fulfill our responsibilities towards an increasing number of senior citizens. And we have to utilize all means – material, moral, religious and cultural – to support and encourage our younger generations to show the same kind of affection, care and attention that they received from their elders in their early years.

A society for all ages based on the United Nations Principles for Older Persons is not merely a lofty goal – it is a quintessential requirement for a just and equitable society that cares about each of its members regardless of their age.

The General Assembly, in endorsing the Madrid Plan of Action, has through the years encouraged Member States, the international community as well as the United Nations system, to devise ways and means to implement the recommendations contained therein, to build additional capacity to respond to the needs and capabilities of each age group, to promote age-integration, and to facilitate multi-generational reciprocity.

I believe it is imperative that we stand firmly for the realization of human rights. I am pleased that at this Session, the General Assembly will consider a report of the Secretary-General on the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons. This will be a good opportunity to ask ourselves how far we have moved beyond words and made the United Nations Principles a reality for our older citizens by providing for their independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity.

Non-governmental organizations, which have always been the conscience of social needs and an advocate for change, are an indispensable element in the equation for progress. I salute you for your unyielding efforts in bringing to the fore, of not only policy makers in the chambers of this Organization, but also of all levels of governments as well as individual communities, on the need to implement resolutions and recommendations on improving the well-being of the older persons.

Together, let us make this world a much better place for older persons and for all generations.