

2 November 2009

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
On Agenda Item: Follow-Up to the Commemoration of the 200th
Anniversary of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade**

Excellencies,

Slavery and the four hundred year-long trans-Atlantic slave trade were abhorrent and inhumane and represented the lowest point in the history of humanity. The horrific and dehumanizing nature of the slave trade whereby the captives were forced into detention and transported as human cargo and mere chattels across the Atlantic to the so-called New World constituted the worst form of human depravity on the part of the captors.

This great human disaster engendered the destruction of human possibility and necessitated the redefining of the African humanity to the world. It poisoned past, present and future relations with others who only saw the African people through this stereotyping, thus damaging the truly human relations among peoples.

Although this horrendous act has been brought to an end, its effects and consequences continue to be with us. This is in spite of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the Convention on Slavery in 1955, the Durban Declaration in 2001, etc. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerance are still rife today, 200 years after the abolition in 1808 of slave trade.

At today's commemoration therefore, we must resolve to take concrete steps to not only ensure that this dark aspect of human history never resurfaces again, but that its consequences are fully addressed. Tangible efforts must be made to redress the imbalance caused by slave trade. Lest we forget, the United Nations and the entire international community must continue to inform the world of this conscience-jolting chapter in our history. In this regard, Member states may wish to support the voluntary fund established pursuant to resolution A/62/122 towards the realization of a permanent memorial in honour of the victims of slavery and slave trade.

Let us also applaud the unbelievable magnanimity and generosity of the victims who managed to retain their humanity and the ability to forgive in the face of indescribable suffering and dehumanization.

Thank you.