

7 December 2009

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
on Agenda Item 70: Strengthening of the Coordination of
Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance of the United Nations**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to open today's plenary debate on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance. The world continues to be faced with complex emergencies which leave whole communities devastated. Without much warning, lives are shattered and families uprooted. Climate change, pandemics, the global food and financial crisis affect populations across the world and have created new emergencies. The work of the United Nations in responding to humanitarian crises remains as important as ever. Every year, Member States have reaffirmed their support for the humanitarian work of the United Nations by adopting the humanitarian resolutions before us by consensus. This year, I would like to express my appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg for coordinating these agenda items.

The resolutions before us reflect the added global challenges, such as the continued food crisis and the global economic and financial crisis, which have increased the vulnerability of populations across the world. Climate change threatens to exacerbate natural disasters. Once again, the most vulnerable populations will be affected disproportionately, and there is a risk that gains in development achieved over years could be reversed. An estimated 36 million people were displaced by sudden-onset natural disasters in 2008. Of those, 20 million were displaced by climate-related disasters. Also, internal displacement owing to conflict continues to be of serious humanitarian concern. Some 26 million are displaced, often for many years. The resolutions emphasize the urgent need to reduce the risk of disaster and prepare for emergencies through capacity building and other mechanisms.

I look forward to a constructive and forward-looking debate and adoption of decisions by the General Assembly which further enhance the capacity of the international community to effectively respond to the humanitarian situations around the globe. I call on Member States to provide the necessary financial resources in order to enable the United Nations and other international and regional organizations working in the field of humanitarian assistance, to effectively undertake their crucial tasks.