

19 February 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the UNA Mid-Atlantic Regional Assembly**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and honour for me, on behalf of Dr. Ali Treki, President of the General Assembly, to offer welcoming remarks at this Mid-Atlantic regional assembly of the United Nations Association of the United States of America.

Your theme “Year of Crises and Opportunities for Change” is an appropriate choice in the current setting. It will enable your assembly to take a close look at the challenges facing the international community, and to appreciate, how in the light of the policy of President Obama for renewed and stronger engagement with the United Nations, the world body can play a more effective role in addressing the major challenges of peace and development that confront the international community.

The US policy is particularly welcome in that it essentially reinforces the already growing emphasis on multilateralism and collective action as the best means to tackle today’s global problems, which no single country or group of countries are capable of managing on their own. From climate change, disarmament and proliferation, global financial crisis to a wide range of conflicts threatening international peace and security, the challenges are immense. The United Nations, as the central tool of multilateralism, is facing high expectations from populations around the world. I would like to recall that the main theme that I had proposed for this year’s general debate i.e. “*Effective responses to global crises: strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development*” was in view of the great felt need and desire to revert to multilateralism as the basis for our collective endeavours to achieve global peace, harmony and prosperity.

Many of the unresolved issues, situations and crises on the international peace and security scene are related to the Islamic world – from Sudan and Somalia to the Middle East and Afghanistan. President Obama’s call, from Cairo, for a new beginning between the United States and the Muslims around the world was the right first step, was wholeheartedly welcomed and had instant positive impact in the Arab and the Muslim world. This outreach, which should be expanded and strengthened, is vital if we are to seize the opportunities for change and better future that come our way.

Comprehensive peace and stability in the Middle East, particularly a just and lasting solution to the core issue of Palestine, is in the interest of the entire international community including the United States. From the outset, the strong commitment by the Obama Administration to promote peace in the region inspired great hope. Subsequent developments with regard to the peace process and the situation on ground have somewhat dashed these hopes. Notwithstanding the setbacks and obstacles, I believe

the international community should encourage and support President Obama to persist and succeed in this collective quest for peace.

I can sense that the Obama policy in support of multilateralism and the positive signals and engagement by the United States across the work of the various main organs of the United Nations, has been well received by Member states. Further concrete steps can really transform these signals and engagement in tangible results on the most pressing issues, including but not limited to the climate change where the U.S. position is crucial; as well as Development, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which can benefit tremendously from the U.S. support, and which as you are aware would be the focus of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly coming September. This year will also be marked by important conferences and meetings on disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular the NPT Review Conference. The renewed momentum in this area, which follows also the fresh approach of the U.S. administration, especially the talks with the Russian Federation, could lead to reducing global tensions and freeing up resources for social and economic development. There are other opportunities to be seized in the process of reform and strengthening of the United Nations, particularly the support for UN peacekeeping as well as the review of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council to make these mechanisms even more effective and successful in advancing the inter-linked objectives of peace and security, development, human rights and rule of law.

The United Nations has a unique status, international character and legitimacy, the essential elements required to manage the world's multiple and complex crises through cooperation and collective action. Let us all work together to empower and enable the United Nations to deliver its full potential. This is a win-win for all.

Wishing you success in your deliberations, I look forward to the perspectives which will emerge there from.

Thank you.