

14 May 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,  
President of the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
At the informal meeting of the General Assembly on International  
Maritime Piracy**

H.E. Mr. Ban ki-Moon  
Secretary General of the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Abdurahman A. Ibrahim,  
1st Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia

H.E. Mr. Amos Kimunya  
Minister of Trade of Kenya

H.E. Ms Stefania Prestigiacomo  
Minister of Environment, Land and Sea of Italy

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to this important discussion that the General Assembly is holding on international maritime piracy. The challenge posed by maritime piracy, particularly off the coast of Somalia, has assumed serious proportions. Piracy is a complex problem with security, political, legal, social, economic and even human rights dimensions and consequences. It has a particularly destabilizing effect on national, regional and international security, stability and trade. Recent statistics from the International Maritime Bureau confirm these concerns. In 2009 alone, pirates attacked 217 ships with 47 successful hijackings and extorted \$60 million in ransom.

While maritime piracy is not a new phenomenon, changes in geographic “hot spots”, rapid geographical spread, increased frequency of piracy incidents and the severity of these attacks warrant a comprehensive, urgent and effective response by the international community.

The problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia is rooted in the insecurity, instability, chaos and lack of governmental authority, which have characterized the situation in Somalia for the last two decades. In recent years, the United Nations has taken actions aimed at strengthening and assisting the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to improve the security situation in Somalia. The Security Council has also authorized measures to counter piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia. A Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia has been established. Most recently, on 27th April, the Security Council adopted resolution 1918 addressing the issue.

These efforts notwithstanding, there is no respite in the piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia. The sovereignty, security and economy of Somalia remain under serious threat. Somalia and its people continue to suffer from problems compounded by internal strife and years of neglect by the international community. The increase in piracy engenders continuing political instability and a further blow to the already dilapidated economy of Somalia. The looting of Somali marine resources and the dumping of toxic waste on its territory only exacerbate the situation. The situation is already a serious threat to maritime security, shipping and trade in this strategic part of the world. If left unaddressed, the consequences will be global.

There is therefore an urgent need for coordinated strategies, not only to fight piracy, but more importantly to address the complex factors that trigger and sustain crime and impunity in Somalia, the North-Western Indian Ocean and the high seas in general.

The situation calls for a truly holistic approach in Somalia covering political, security, governance and humanitarian tracks. It is true that the primary responsibility lies with the people of Somalia, but given the magnitude of the problems, Somalis cannot do it alone. The international community must step forward to help Somalia. I commend the African Union for its efforts and sacrifice in support of Somalia. I also commend the efforts exerted by the League of Arab States and the European Union. However, a much broader international effort and allocation of resources are required to effectively face the challenge. I call on the Security Council, in particular, to shoulder its responsibility with regard to Somalia by undertaking strong and resolute measures in support of a wider political, peacekeeping and peace-building strategy in Somalia, to bring peace to the country and to ensure its sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity. I believe the General Assembly will fully back the Security Council in this objective.

The United Nations is indispensable in forging international cooperation and increasing coordination of all efforts to address the problem of piracy. As the universal and most representative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly has a crucial role to play in this regard. This is why I have convened this meeting - to provide an opportunity for an informed, inclusive and comprehensive discussion of the problem of international maritime piracy. It is my fervent hope that Member states and other stakeholders would take an in-depth look at the various facets of the piracy issue with a view to devising the much needed collective and coherent international response. I trust this discussion will also serve to reaffirm the urgency of restoring peace and stability in Somalia and thus provide a fillip to the international efforts in that regard. I am also confident that the Istanbul Conference on Somalia, which will be held from 21-23 May 2010, will further intensify our collective efforts in tackling the conditions in Somalia and the problem of international piracy.

I would like to thank all the distinguished panelists and senior officials for their participation and wish you all a very productive discussion.