

12 July 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Ceremony Marking the 15th Srebrenica Commemoration**

Excellencies

We meet here today to remember and pay tribute to the victims of the Srebrenica massacre 15 years ago. The Bosnian city of Srebrenica was the scene of the worst crime on European soil since the Second World War. Some 8,000 unarmed civilians, including young boys, were killed as part of an ethnic cleansing campaign by Serb forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Srebrenica today serves as a painful reminder of the dangers of hatred, racism and prejudice.

The international community as a whole – including the United Nations – has to accept its share of responsibility for not doing enough to prevent the mass murder of civilians in a city designated by the Security Council as a “safe area”. Our collective failure to respond to the evidence of genocide in Srebrenica weighs heavy on the international community. The quest for justice after the massacre has been slow. But for survivors and relatives of victims there is some comfort to be drawn from the fact that the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has recognized the mass killings in Srebrenica as genocide and successfully prosecuted some of those responsible. The Serbian parliament has condemned the tragedy and apologized for not doing enough to prevent it. The participation of the President of Serbia in this year’s commemoration in Srebrenica shows that the massacre is universally recognized for what it was and that old wounds are starting to heal.

15 years after the massacre, only half of the victims have been identified and buried. Many of those responsible for the massacre still remain at large. The quest for justice and accountability will continue. Their lives and their suffering will not be forgotten. I extend my heartfelt sympathies to the relatives of the victims.