

21 September 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Side Event on Least Developed Countries and Millennium
Development Goals**

Heads of State and Government,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome this opportunity to meet with representatives of Least Developed Countries.

The Millennium Development Goals are of great importance to all of us, the 192 Member states of the United Nations, but they are of vital importance to the Least Developed Countries which are confronted with specific challenges and vulnerabilities.

With the Millennium Development Goals, the international community has adopted the most ambitious and comprehensive initiative ever launched to fight poverty in this world. The Millennium Development Goals are a paradigm shift.

They explicitly recognize that poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon and that for the reduction of poverty to last, progress is needed in many interrelated areas such as health, education, and environment to name just a few.

With the Millennium Development Goals, the international community also emphasizes the necessity to build a global partnership for development that includes all stakeholders – donor and developing countries, non governmental actors, the private sector and foundations. Ownership of national development strategies by the developing countries and mutual accountability among all stakeholders have to be at the core of our efforts to reduce poverty.

Ten years into the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, where do we stand? Unfortunately, while there is tangible progress in some areas, the picture is mixed; there are in particular wide regional disparities. Poverty remains high in the Least Developed Countries and progress is too slow on hunger, education, health and other social sectors. Least Developed Countries are facing structural challenges; they also have been severely impacted by the three crises – the economic, the food and the energy crises – which the world recently went through. These countries are also disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change. We have to focus on the specific needs and constraints of the Least Developed Countries if we want to alleviate suffering and raise their population out of poverty.

Heads of State and government,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Millennium Development Goals are measured globally but they have to be realized nationally, in each country. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the most vulnerable countries will be the real measure of our success in keeping the promise we have made with the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and that we are reiterating today with the High Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals. We have know-how and resources to do it.

This side event on Least Developed Countries and Millennium Development Goals is an important contribution to the High Level Meeting itself. The issues that you are about to address will help finding concrete ways to bridge the gaps and step up progress to ensure that the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved in the Least Developed Countries in 2015.

Greater focus on the needs and constraints of the Least Developed Countries in implementing the Millennium Development Goals will also contribute to the success of the 4th LDC conference that will take place in Istanbul next year, another milestone for the Least Developed Countries. I am looking forward to working with you to prepare this conference and I will do my utmost to join you for this important event.

Thank you.