

8 May 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the Inauguration Ceremony of the Civil Society
Organization Forum**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here at the inauguration ceremony of the Civil Society forum. I congratulate all of you for your commitment and dedication to supporting the cause of the Least Developed Countries.

Civil society and non-governmental organizations are crucial partners for the Least Developed Countries in their development endeavor. You act as society's conscience and are often in the lead when it comes to getting things done.

The diverse representation of civil society present here today reflects the broad range of interests in this issue. It is also a testament to your confidence in multilateral engagement in the development of the Least Developed Countries.

There is no doubt that many Least Developed Countries have great development potential. Over the last decade – and before the economic and financial crisis - the Least Developed Countries as a group experienced high growth, even surpassing the target growth rate set in the Brussels Program of Action. This success is to a large extent due to the implementation of the Program.

This highlights the possibilities that can be achieved when all development components, including the NGOs and civil society, act in concert to create the enabling national and international environment to facilitate business and market growth.

We have all heard the importance for development of good-quality institutions and policies, of the need to eliminate corruption and of the implementation of good governance at all levels of society.

Success in these reforms will help stimulate investment, job creation and mobilize domestic resources for the development of productive capacities in the Least Developed Countries. This was true for many Asian developing countries and will also be the success story for the Least Developed Countries in the coming years.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries is about uplifting the welfare of the poorest of the poor of this world. The role of civil society is particularly important in this regard. Civil society is best positioned to reach out to the poorest and to convey their aspirations. It further provides an important check and balance.

During the interactive civil society hearing organized by the General Assembly and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries on 1 April 2011, civil society emphasized the centrality of enhancing productive capacities for the Least Developed Countries to create jobs and produce an array of goods and services. Refocusing international aid and cooperation towards the strengthening of the business environment, trade, and productive investment of the Least Developed Countries were also highlighted. These messages also came out of the informal thematic debate on financing and investing in productive capacities in the Least Developed Countries that I organized at the General Assembly on 11 March 2011.

In Istanbul during the next few days, these are the very issues that will be discussed. Your continued engagement in the multilateral process provides precious inputs on the priorities for the development programs for the Least Developed Countries. This civil society forum is an important instrument to articulate your contributions towards a meaningful outcome of the fourth Conference. I wish you very successful deliberations.