

15 September 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
on International Day of Democracy**

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished delegates,

It is an honor for me to be with you to mark the celebration of the International Day of Democracy.

Democracy is one of the universal values of the United Nations. Its pursuit is often at the heart of the work of both the General Assembly and the broader UN.

Ensuring citizens are free to determine their own governance systems; assisting governments to ensure transparency and accountability in their work; encouraging people, including minority groups, to participate fully in all aspects of their life are indeed major tasks of the UN.

In marking September 15 as the International Day of Democracy, the General Assembly intended this day to be an opportunity for Member States to reflect on the importance of democracy and the rule of law.

This year, the timing of the International Day of Democracy is particularly pertinent. As world leaders are preparing to discuss progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and efforts to reduce poverty, democracy remains central to any development approach.

Accountable leadership, responsive government, and the participation of people are essential to ensuring lasting change. Development, in turn, will also help consolidate democratic institutions. Democracy, development, and human rights are closely interlinked, and have to play an essential role in our efforts to combat poverty.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
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Today, many challenges are global and we need to address them with global action. This global action has to be organized; this is what global governance is about. It is essential that we ensure also accountability, transparency and inclusiveness at the international level.

The General Assembly has to play an important role as the most representative international forum, where all member states participate on an equal basis.

Yet, there is a risk of the UN being marginalized by the emergence of new actors on the international stage. The point is not to deny the important role that groups like the G20 can play. The point is to ensure that appropriate channels are in place for information and consultation between these actors and the General Assembly.

This is why, after consulting with many permanent representatives, regional groups and the Secretary-General, I have proposed the topic “Reaffirming the central role of the United Nations and its General Assembly in global governance” for the general debate of this 65th session. I look forward to working with you on this important area.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Distinguished delegates,

Let me conclude by highlighting once again the importance of democracy as a central value of not only our individual member states but also of the UN and the international community as a whole.

Thank you.