

23 September 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the General Debate of the 65th Session of the United
Nations General Assembly**

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

As the time comes to open the general debate of the sixty-fifth session, we already have a week of intensive work behind us. I would like to thank you for your contribution to the success of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals. By reaffirming its determination to overcome poverty and suffering throughout the world, the international community that you represent here today has sent a strong message to the whole of humankind.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Much remains to be done and we must strengthen our resolve. We know that additional efforts are needed. We have an action plan; now we must implement it.

In order to succeed, we need a genuine global partnership borne out of inclusive global governance, where all stakeholders can make themselves heard.

But this global partnership is needed in many other areas too. Our world is more interdependent, more interconnected than before, and it faces global challenges, which affect all countries and their citizens, whether they like it or not, and regardless of who is responsible.

Current realities provide all too many examples.

Poverty, conflicts, global warming, the economic and financial crisis, migration, pandemics, terrorism, international crime and a whole range of other issues have consequences that cannot be managed at an individual level and that humankind can address only through common global strategies.

In establishing such a global partnership, we come up against the difficulty of building consensus on the action to be taken. It is for that reason that I have chosen global governance or, more specifically, “reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance” as the suggested theme of our general debate.

The United Nations has unique legitimacy to play a central role. With its 192 Member States, our General Assembly is a near-universal body and reflects the diversity of situations and interests at stake.

It is there to promote the rights of every woman and man on our planet. Any matters within the scope of the Charter may be discussed by the General Assembly.

The United Nations, as an operational entity, also has the expertise and the presence on the ground to play this central role. I am thinking in particular of its peacekeeping missions, humanitarian operations and natural disaster response activities, as well as all the work carried out far from the media spotlight. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of United Nations staff members who, with great commitment and often at risk to life and limb, work to promote peace and prosperity around the world. We owe them our sincere appreciation, on behalf of all those who enjoy a better life thanks to their endeavours.

However, there is a danger that the United Nations could be marginalized as other actors emerge on the international scene. The United Nations has been criticized for not being effective or efficient enough. Determining urgent action through a more restricted forum can seem easier and more expeditious.

This much should be clear: the point is not to deny the role of such entities as the Group of Twenty. The economic and financial crisis has highlighted the importance of a rapid and coordinated response.

However, there is a vital and pressing need to bridge the efforts of different actors. The mechanisms for communication, consultation and cooperation between those entities and other States must be improved. Only the United Nations and its General Assembly can do so.

In order for the United Nations to comprehensively fulfil its global governance role, we must press for it to be strong, inclusive and open. A close connection must be established between States and the private sector, civil society and regional actors. We must listen to other key actors and interact with them outside this Assembly.

A strong United Nations requires a decisive effort to reform the Organization and, in particular, revitalize the General Assembly, reform the Security Council and review the work of the Human Rights Council and Peacebuilding Commission. We must strengthen the economic organizations of the United Nations, enabling them fully to serve the purpose for which they were established.

Lastly, it is up to you, the Member States, to make the United Nations a strong instrument that can take centre stage in confronting global challenges.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the course of the general debate, I invite you to share your views on inclusive global governance. Numerous issues await urgent action. Numerous wars, disasters and tragedies have persisted for too long to allow any delay. The world expects us to be more effective in uniting around actions that enjoy universal endorsement and commitment.

We must develop the best possible linkage between legitimacy and effectiveness. As President of the General Assembly, I intend to convene informal meetings on the topic.

Having suggested some pointers for our discussion, I wish to listen to you. It is now up to you, leaders of the world, to take a stand, proclaim that too many problems and scourges have persisted for too long, and together determine milestones leading to a global partnership in which all forces will be united, and all countries will feel included in joint effective action for a better world.

We must have the courage to debate difficult questions, but we must do so in a spirit of friendship and openness.