

1 October 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the International Day of Non-Violence**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to join you today to commemorate the International Day of Non-Violence, and to unveil this limited edition book, "MKG - Imaging Peace, Truth and Ahimsa".

This magnificent book - which is a work of art, in addition to being an important piece of literature - chronicles the life of Mahatma Ghandi through photos, quotes, stories and letters.

By honoring Mahatma Ghandi's work in this book, you are ensuring that Mahatma Ghandi's candle continues to burn: the candle that inspires people to seek their rights, to determine their own lives and resist foreign occupation, and to overcome discrimination and racism through peaceful means.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2007, the General Assembly declared 2 October as the International Day of Non-Violence. By commemorating this day every year, the General Assembly hopes to reinforce the timeless message of non-violence, and to encourage Member States, UN entities, civil society organizations and individuals to step up their efforts to deliver this urgent message through education and public awareness.

The UN Charter establishes non-violence as an important principle guiding our work.

Article 1 of the Charter states that one of the UN's purposes is to settle international disputes or situations by peaceful means. Equally, the efforts of the UN to promote tolerance, the respect of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, development and mutual understanding are all underpinned by one common idea: that to make lasting, sustainable change, our efforts must be undertaken peacefully and in the spirit of consent and cooperation.

And let me be clear: the opposite of violence is not passiveness. The opposite of violence is creativity. The opposite of violence means inclusive solutions to conflicts, that are based on dialogue and that seek reconciliation. Non-violence is also the rejection of brutality and of aggression. In adopting non-violent approaches, governments and civil society groups must act with determination and consistency, inclusively and with respect.

As another great advocate of non-violence, Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon, it is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals."

Words and non-violent behavior will always be more powerful than force and violence.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great hope that the light of Mahatma Ghandi's candle of nonviolence will burn brightly around the world, today and for eternity.

Thank you.