

25 May 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening Ceremony at the 16th Non-aligned Movement
Ministerial Conference and the Commemorative Meeting**

Mr. Foreign Minister,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor for me to be here with you today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Non-Aligned Movement and to open this 16th Ministerial Conference. I take this opportunity to thank the Government of Indonesia for its invitation and for its warm hospitality.

As we celebrate this historic landmark, I want to congratulate the Member States of NAM. Over the past fifty years, NAM has been an important force in advancing global peace, security, prosperity and development. The ten principles of Bandung which were adopted with the foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement have been critical in defining inter-state relations and in allowing countries to look beyond their differences, to uphold their shared values and find common ground for cooperation.

After the Second World War, during the era of great tension between two dominant powers, NAM became an important driving force for multilateralism. NAM strived to strengthen the role of the United Nations and of its General Assembly in particular. I value your contribution, as it is my vision to have a strong, inclusive, and open United Nations, playing the central role in the global debate.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The names of Nasser of Egypt, Nkrumah of Ghana, Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia and Tito of the former Yugoslavia are the ones of the founding fathers of NAM. They conceived NAM as a movement to support the countries of the South to address the challenges of that time; challenges as critical as the struggle for national independence and decolonization, the non-adherence to multilateral military pacts, the reduction of poverty and socioeconomic development.

The founding fathers planted the seeds for nationhood to thrive and to allow newly independent nations to interact in the international community and to cooperate in addressing external challenges. This allowed many NAM countries to gain international recognition, to develop and bring prosperity to their people.

NAM should continue to strive to ensure national independence for all people including the Palestinian people. NAM engagement in the Middle East peace process is critical to achieve a just and lasting solution to decades of conflict and violence in the region.

Today, the challenges that a number of NAM members are facing also come from within their borders. It is therefore important for NAM to continue to strengthen its cooperation in the pursuit and the promotion of democracy and human rights as envisioned by its founding fathers and as enshrined in the UN Charter.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At this point, there is one specific feature of NAM that I want to highlight: it is the great ideological, political, economic, social and cultural diversity of its Members. Remarkably enough, with such diversity, NAM has remained true to its founding principles and objectives. Its Members, anchored in the various regions of the world, persistently worked together to overcome challenges towards common goals. The movement has thus played a significant role in global governance over the last five decades. I am convinced that its diversity is a unique asset for NAM. NAM can thus be a crucial platform for exchanging views and forging consensus. I therefore call on NAM to continue to be active in the global debate and to assist in shaping a global governance system that is efficient, representative and open. There is an urgent need today of such a system.

Indeed, the challenges that NAM and the whole international community face have become broader in scope, more interconnected and interdependent. Global economic, environmental, social and security issues affect all countries and their citizens, regardless of where problems originated and who is bearing the responsibility. Issues are no longer strictly divided between those of concern to the South and those of concern to the North; they no longer stop at the border.

Today, the global governance landscape has also become more complex. Traditional multilateral institutions like the United Nations or the Bretton Woods institutions are criticized for not being efficient enough and for not being representative enough of the economic, demographic and political shift that has been taking place over the last decades. New actors have emerged such as the informal groupings of countries like the G20, but also stakeholders from the civil society and the private sector which are increasingly involved in global governance. There is a risk that the United Nations is no longer seen as a central place for the global debate and is marginalized.

We need a global governance system that reflects the new realities of today and that effectively addresses the global challenges. Such a system must combine leadership, legitimacy and expertise.

For me, there is no doubt. The United Nations have a central role to play in global governance. The General Assembly, with its 192 Member States and its system of ‘one country, one vote’, is the place where legitimacy lies and is the main world democratic and deliberative body.

I have made strengthening the role of the United Nations and of its General Assembly in global governance a key issue for this 65th session of the General Assembly. I am pleased that the resolution on the United Nations and Global Governance, initiated by one of the Members of NAM, Chile, and co-sponsored by about 100 Member States – half of them being NAM countries - was adopted by consensus in the General Assembly last December. This is a clear recognition of the value of the United Nations for NAM and the whole membership and this will allow the work on this issue to continue beyond the current session.

NAM as one of the largest group of the General Assembly will play a key role in shaping the framework of global governance for the 21st century. I call on NAM to take constructive and resolute steps to strengthen and reform the main bodies of the United Nations. A strong United Nations indeed requires a decisive effort to revitalize the General Assembly, to reform the Security Council, to review the work of the Human Rights Council and to strengthen the ECOSOC. I count on NAM to constructively contribute to advancing the reform process on the Security Council. NAM is in a unique position for so doing since a wide spectrum of opinions is represented through its Members: this is the opportunity to go beyond entrenched positions and seek a solution that can rally wide support.

We also have to establish consultation, communication and cooperation mechanisms between the United Nations and the other major actors of global governance. I am pleased that my efforts to build bridges with the G20, which started with pre and post G20 summit meetings of the General Assembly with the Korean presidency of the G20 last year, are continuing this year with the French presidency. Several NAM members are also participating in the G20, they can thus play a pivotal role in bringing the G20 closer to the United Nations.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The strength of NAM today is not only in the number of its members that represents almost two thirds of the United Nations membership. This sheer number in itself is remarkable. But, even more remarkable is the fact that many NAM members are now increasingly being recognized as important players on the international stage. By assuming this more prominent role, NAM has at the same time to assume new duties and new responsibilities. It will thus be a reliable partner within the international community and significantly contribute to progress on pressing political issues, such as the reform of the Security Council and the Middle East peace process.

I thank you.