

**Message from H.E. Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the 63rd General Assembly,
to the Annual Student Observance of
International Day of Peace
19 September 2008
United Nations, New York**

My dear students, I am pleased to welcome you to the UN. I am encouraged by your energy and optimism, your technological savvy and your commitment to further the work of our Organization in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world.

I am absolutely certain that you, the young people of our world, are a formidable, decisive and creative force for building a world at peace with itself.

Widespread violence is all too present in today's world, whether overtly in wars of aggression and civil conflicts, or in the more hidden but equally lethal forms of structural violence that deny the poor their right to development. The only enduring way to overcome the logic of violence and its manifestations is to work with fervor to disable the tools used to wage war and replace the logic of "I" and "mine" with the logic of "we" and "ours". It means coming into full consciousness of our connectedness with the lives of others, as well as with our planet and its resources.

We must never delude ourselves, or let others pretend, that Peace is merely the absence of war or some exalted state of impassivity. World peace will only be achieved through active resistance to all that negates and diminishes human dignity, and waging peace, is therefore, eminently political and oftentimes provocative.

Today it means working for disarmament and nuclear control, not simply non-proliferation. It means applying the instruments available to us, in their full spirit, and complying with our international obligations, whether environmental, humanitarian, financial, economical or in the domain of human rights.

As you examine the work of contemporaries in peacekeeping missions around the world, bring your passion and keen sense of justice, of what you know to be right and wrong, to have a bearing in international affairs. As we prepare to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, examine the new emerging issues that remind us of our connections to others, this planet we share; probe deeper the connections between our lifestyles and the lives of the world's poor. And more than finding an answer, ask the hard questions that all too often are avoided for being too difficult, too delicate. It is your right to ask them and your candor is sorely needed to move forward.

You are 'virtual wizards' of instant communications. I encourage you to use your skills and interconnectedness through communications to speak to and for

peoples around the world, and to further the work of this Organization. Build upon and strengthen today's human rights' agenda to respond to the challenges of your generation.

I commend and thank you.

