

25 February 2010

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki,
President of the 64th Session of the General Assembly,
at the San Marino Unicef Awards**

Excellencies, Distinguished Ministries, Ladies and Gentlemen

Her Excellency Mrs. Antonella Mularoni, Minister of Foreign and Political Affairs of the Republic of San Marino

Ms. Ann Veneman, UNICEF Executive Director

His Excellency Mr. Daniele Bodini

Excellencies,

Ladies, gentlemen and children

The UN and the General Assembly brings governments together, but it is the peoples of the world as enshrined in the UN Charter that the UN must serve. With half the world's population under the age of 25, young people are more and more central to the future of humanity. The children and young people of the world did not create the problems that we face today: natural disasters due to climate change, the financial and economic crisis and the conflicts and diseases which continue to make people suffer. But children and youth are dealing with the consequences of these challenges every day; it is their future which is at risk.

As you know, the General Assembly passed a resolution proclaiming 2010 as the International Year of Youth starting in August this year under the theme of dialogue and mutual understanding. The aim of the year is to promote dialogue and understanding across generations. It is an opportunity for the international community, governments and civil society to recognise the needs and challenges of young people, and to encourage and empower young people to fully participate in all aspects of society.

In this year when the High Level Plenary Summit on the MDGs will take place in September, it is especially important that we recognise the key role that young people play in fighting poverty, as well as giving the support, space and opportunity to young men and women, boys and girls to realise their potential whether they live in New York or Beijing, the slums of Rio or Kibera in Nairobi, or rural villages in India or Libya.

Young people are key to securing the Millennium Development Goals, they are key to fighting poverty because they are living in poverty, and they are key to encouraging and maintaining dialogue across civilisations because they represent different experiences and perspectives from all walks of life.

I would like to congratulate the three winners here tonight from Honduras, Azerbaijan and Kenya, on their success but more importantly for helping young boys and girls in their communities and for using their own initiative to do something good. The General Assembly has welcomed young delegates as part of the World Programme of Action on Youth, and as President of the General Assembly, I welcome and invite young people to visit, and for missions to bring their young citizens to the UN.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Republic of San Marino, the Minister of Foreign and Political Affairs, Her Excellency Mularoni, His Excellency Ambassador Bodini, UNICEF and UNICEF's Executive Director Ann Veneman, for supporting the work of these young people and allowing us this opportunity to recognise and applaud their efforts.