

13 April 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,
President of the 65th Session of the General Assembly,
at a Meeting with the Ad Hoc Working Group on Revitalization**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure and interest that I meet today with your Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly to share with you some ideas on this important issue. I wish to thank their Excellencies Ambassadors Dalius Čekuolis of Lithuania and Camillo Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for their invitation. I also wish to congratulate them on their effective leadership of the work of the Group.

I have said it on several occasions since the beginning of this session: my vision is of a strong United Nations and General Assembly, as the main forum for global debate. I have noted with satisfaction that this vision is widely shared. The fact that the General Assembly adopted by consensus last December a resolution sponsored by over a hundred Member States on the role of the United Nations in global governance illustrates the importance of the subject.

In order for the General Assembly to play this central role, in order for it to truly be the centrepiece of global governance, there are several dimensions to consider.

First, the General Assembly must take its place among the actors of global governance and its authority and visibility must be reinforced.

Bridges must be built with actors of global governance, such as the G-20. As a preliminary concrete measure, I have organized informal debates before and after the Seoul summit. I am happy that the building of bridges between the United Nations and the G-20 is continuing this year under the French Presidency. The French Minister of Agriculture participated in an informal General Assembly plenary in February to inform Member States on the priorities of the French Presidency of the G-20 in the area of agriculture, and before the Cannes Summit in November I expect that there will be other opportunities to bring the G-20 and the Assembly closer together. Furthermore, this leads me to stress how useful the prerogative granted to the President, as part of the work on revitalization, to hold informal thematic debates, has been as an excellent means of positioning the Assembly on current topics and thereby to increase its relevance and visibility.

Good interaction between the General Assembly and other main organs of the United Nations is also needed in order to gain coherence, coordination and complementarity. Since I took office, I have held regular meetings with all the Presidents of the Security Council, as well as the Presidents of ECOSOC,

the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The review of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission furthermore showed the importance of close coordination among all the bodies involved so that the processes could work smoothly. The same is true for the review of the work of the Human Rights Council currently under way. A distribution of tasks between Geneva and New York was necessary, as well as synchronization of efforts, which first began in Geneva and are now being completed in New York. We have held several meetings on that subject with the President of the Council and the co-facilitators.

Good interactions have also been established with the Secretary-General and his office. I am pleased that the Secretary-General is quite willing to inform the General Assembly about his travel and activities abroad and issues of immediate importance.

A second dimension of revitalization has to do with the respect we have for the Assembly, as the pre-eminent meeting place for the international community, and the spirit in which we make use of this tool for debate. The more we treat the Assembly seriously ourselves, the more it will gain in credibility and prestige with our partners.

In this regard, the choice of subjects on the agenda for our discussions is fundamental. The Assembly should be anchored in reality and address matters that are of central concern at the moment. This is the best way to make the Assembly relevant. This year, our experience has been of a strong, high-level presence in all delegations and high quality in the discussions in meetings devoted to current issues like the situation in Haiti or the suspension of Libya from the Human Rights Council.

We must prevent procedure and routine from becoming blockages preventing rapid action to deal with matters. Too full an agenda can have a negative impact on the quality of the debate; we must ask ourselves if it is necessary to continue to address certain topics year after year or if they can be reorganized. Holding too many high-level meetings can likewise dilute the attention paid to them and make it difficult for Heads of State and Government to participate in all of them. The efforts made by the Second Committee to rationalize its agenda seem particularly interesting to me and I am certain that this is an example that the Assembly should follow.

We should also pay greater attention to follow-up to our decisions and their implementation. Too often, our resolutions go unheeded.

There are some more incidental aspects, but which still matter for the efficiency of our work. At the risk of appearing pedantic, since the beginning of the sixty-fifth session, I have insisted that meetings must start on time, and I believe that is appreciated. This is important for the credibility of the Assembly and respect for the participants. We should make still more efforts to observe the deadlines for completion of our work; waiting until the early hours of 24 December discredits the institution to some extent.

Lastly, concerning the Office of the President of the General Assembly, my predecessor made several very useful recommendations, and I invite you to consider those proposals.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The initiative is in your hands. I have confidence in your desire to imbue the General Assembly with a true spirit of dialogue and willingness to hear and to make it a powerful instrument in the service of the community of nations.

Thank you for your attention, and my best wishes for your discussions.