

28 June 2011

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Joseph Deiss,  
President of the 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Thematic Debate on The United Nations in Global Governance**

Your Excellency the Secretary-General  
Your Excellency the President  
Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to welcome you to our informal debate. I warmly thank you all for having responded to my invitation to take part in our consideration today of the United Nations in global governance, an issue which I am convinced is of crucial importance in these early stages of the twenty-first century.

We are at a critical juncture, when we are in greater need than ever before of a system of global governance that is efficient, representative and inclusive. The world as we have always known it is being dramatically changed by three substantive movements that we can no longer ignore. First, the challenges and problems that confront us increasingly have global dimensions and thus require a collective, coordinated response. Second, demographic, economic and political adjustments are taking place all over the world, and third, while endeavouring to face those new realities, the structure of global governance is becoming increasingly fragmented and complex. We are witnessing criticism and marginalization of the traditional multilateral institutions and a proliferation of ad hoc groupings and initiatives. However, the system that is emerging is, as yet, incapable of finding solutions to critical questions that include, inter alia, the situation in the Near East, global warming, the conclusion of the Doha Round, and the reform of the United Nations Security Council. It is against that background that I proposed the topic of "reaffirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance" for the general debate of the 65th General Assembly in September 2010.

The Heads of State and Government who were present in New York made extensive allusion to that topic in their statements, and expressed their conviction that the United Nations is the central forum for global debate. However, they also made it clear that, if the United Nations is to be capable of playing that role, reforms must be undertaken urgently. That was an unmistakable signal that, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we must continue to deliberate, and find real solutions that will improve the system of global governance. That message was reinforced in December 2010, when the General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution on the United Nations and global governance that was sponsored by some 100 States. That will make it possible for work to be continued beyond the 65th session.

I am happy that we will continue this debate with you today. I hope that our discussion will make a useful contribution to the report on global governance that the Secretary-General will present to the

66th session of the General Assembly, pursuant to the resolution that I just mentioned. At the end of the day, I will formulate several conclusions that will be available on the web page of the President of the General Assembly and serve as a reference document.

The first round table, this morning, will allow us to discuss in greater depth the matter of global economic governance and, in particular, the capacity of the international community to go beyond crisis management and to formulate and put into practice longer-term strategies for balanced and durable global economic growth.

The G20 demonstrated its ability to deal quickly, and in a concerted manner, with the economic and financial crisis that erupted in 2008. However, what can be said about its legitimacy? What can be said about its capacity to become a leader outside times of crisis?

Efficiency does not bestow legitimacy. As far as I am concerned, that is the sole preserve of the General Assembly, which, with its 192 States Members and its system of 'One State, one voice' is, par excellence, the democratic forum at the global level. It is therefore important to find ways of legitimizing the decisions that were taken by the G20.

I am very happy that our attempt to bring the G20 closer to the General Assembly, that was begun under the Presidency of Korea, is being intensified under the Presidency of France this year.

With regard to strategic leadership, it seems to me that the G20 is at a critical stage. The French Presidency has proposed several very pertinent fields that include, in particular, economic imbalances, agricultural prices, food security, development, employment and social protection floors. Those ambitious objectives are to be commended, and the Cannes Summit will demonstrate the extent to which the G20 can achieve results on matters over which the interests of its members are sharply divided. However, in the longer term, is the G20 system of annual Presidencies compatible with a strategic vision? Does that system make it possible to ensure the coherence of initiatives that are taken over several years under various Presidents?

There are many other questions to be answered concerning global economic governance, especially with regard to the role of United Nations economic entities. I am thinking, at the intergovernmental level, of ECOSOC in particular. How can it be strengthened? How can it be made into an essential actor in global economic governance? At the agency and special programme level, how can mandates be better coordinated?

Those are of course just a few examples.

This afternoon's round table has a very visionary ambition, in that it plans to look ahead to 2025 and reflect on how the United Nations can remain relevant to meeting the global challenges of the future.

That will mean that we have to deal with a wide range of questions. One important element is to attempt to identify the type of global challenge that we will face in the future, in order to identify the types of global entity that we will need. We will also have to ask ourselves how we can be more

representative and inclusive of non-governmental actors, civil society and the private sector, all of which are playing an ever larger role in global governance. How can we hear their voices more clearly while maintaining their non-governmental specificities?

In order to ensure that the United Nations remains relevant to the world in 2025 and beyond, we have to learn the lessons of the past 60 years and effect the requisite reforms. We must dare to be flexible and innovative in order to ensure that working methods are efficient. However, it also seems to me to be essential to accept that we can't have it all: the sovereignty of the nation State that we have known up until the present day, defence of national interests, globalization and an efficient system of global governance. We must realize that global responses for the common good will necessitate concessions. We will have to see beyond national positions to the common good. What may appear to be a loss in the short term is undoubtedly the only way we can gain in the long term. The fight against climate change is the best example. The economist Dani Rodrik, in his last work on globalization, describes the tension between the sovereign State, democracy and globalization as the political trilemma of the global economy. I would say that we will have to find out how to square the circle.

It is on this type of question that I invite you to reflect and express yourselves today. We are lucky enough to have amongst us during this debate some very high-calibre guests, who will share with us their experiences and views on global governance. I invite you to take advantage of their presence and make the discussion as interactive and stimulating as possible.