

## **New General Assembly President opens session with call for UN reform**



Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, (right) President for the 63rd General Assembly hands over the gavel to incoming President Ali Treki

15 September 2009 – The General Assembly opened its 64th annual session today with its new President, Ali Treki of Libya, calling for reform of the United Nations with an expanded Security Council representing full geographic diversity and an Assembly that has the ability to implement its resolutions.

Currently only resolutions of the 15-member Council, and not those of the 192-member Assembly, are legally binding.

“The General Assembly, which represents the entire world, has been hampered by the obstacles in its path,” Dr. Treki said in his opening speech. “It has been unable to implement or enforce its resolutions. The General Assembly must be reformed to regain its international legitimacy by ensuring that its voice is heard and respected and its resolutions implemented.”

Turning to the Security Council, he noted that Africa comprises 53 States, none of which is a permanent member – a position held only by China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and United States. Such is the case, too, of Latin America and the Forum of Small States, which account for over half of the world’s inhabitants.

“It is vital to reform the Security Council and to revitalize the General Assembly so that they can comprehensively fulfil their roles,” he declared.

Turning to world affairs, Dr. Treki called for dialogue and mutual understanding to resolve problems, not embargos and blockades which he called fruitless and serving to exacerbate antagonism and rebellion. He also noted that the gap between rich and poor has been growing steadily wider. “In an unequal world, we cannot hope for peace and security to prevail,” he said.

Condemning terrorism, he urged that close attention be paid to its roots, causes and contributing factors. “This is true of terrorism carried out by individuals, groups and States; State terrorism is the harshest form of terrorism,” he added.

Discussing the Middle East, he said “the Palestinian people’s aspirations towards independence and its right to return to its land in accordance with United Nations resolutions are two fundamental conditions for the swift realization of peace and security in that sensitive part of the world.”

Without mentioning Israel by name, he added: "There must be an end to settlement activities, which have been condemned by the entire international community. The removal of illegal and illegitimate settlements would help to achieve security and a just peace in accordance with the resolutions with which we must comply."

Dr. Treki also called for progress at the Climate Change summit convened by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon next Tuesday to produce recommendations for the conference on the issue to be held in Copenhagen in December

And he urged additional efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that aim to slash a host of social ills by 2015, and steps towards non-proliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

**News Tracker: past stories on this issue**

Assembly President calls for revamping UN in final address to Member States