

## Revitalized General Assembly should be main forum for global debate, says President



General Assembly President Joseph Deiss

13 April 2011 – As Member States continue their discussions on ways to revitalize the work of the General Assembly, its President today encouraged them to make the 192-member body a powerful instrument in the service of the global community.

“My vision is of a strong United Nations and General Assembly, as the main forum for global debate,” Joseph Deiss said in his opening [remarks](#) to the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Revitalization.

“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,” he added.

The first of these is for the Assembly to take its place among the actors of global governance and to reinforce its authority and visibility. “Bridges must be built with actors of global governance,” he said, citing in particular the Group of 20 (G-20) leading economies.

Mr. Deiss often discusses issues such as global governance and UN reform on his official travels. Over the past few weeks, he has visited Germany, the United Kingdom, Finland, Liechtenstein and Russia, and next week he will travel to Panama, followed by Brazil.

In his remarks, he also stated the need for good interaction between the Assembly and the UN’s other main organs in order to gain coherence, coordination and complementarity. Since he took

office, Mr. Deiss has held regular meetings with the heads of the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Just yesterday he met with Ambassador Néstor Osorio of Colombia, which holds the Security Council presidency for April, and discussed a number of issues, including Haiti, Libya and Côte d'Ivoire. The two Presidents also noted the importance of further strengthening coordination and interaction between their respective bodies.

A second dimension of revitalization, said the President, has to do with the respect given to the Assembly, as the pre-eminent meeting place for the international community. "The more we treat the Assembly seriously ourselves, the more it will gain in credibility and prestige with our partners."

The choice of subjects on the agenda for discussion is "fundamental," he stated, noting that 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."

He also cited the need to prevent procedures and routine from blocking rapid action to deal with issues.

"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."

It is also necessary to pay greater attention to follow-up and implementation of the Assembly's decisions, he said, noting that too often its resolutions go unheeded.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[General Assembly President stresses central role of UN in global governance](#)