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## Development, environment and UN reform the focus of new Assembly session



Ali Treki (right), outgoing President of the General Assembly, passes the gavel to his successor Joseph Deiss. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon applauds

14 September 2010 – The new President of the General Assembly, Joseph Deiss, today outlined the body's priorities during its 65th session over the next year, identifying the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)), reform of the United Nations and the promotion of environmentally sustainable development as key areas of focus.

In his [opening statement](#) to the session, which kicked off this afternoon in New York, Mr. Deiss, a Swiss citizen, stressed that the MDGs "are within our reach," despite the recent global economic crisis.

"In particular, we must bridge the gaps in the fight against hunger, child mortality and maternal health," he said. "This is possible. Our work in the coming week must result in a sincere commitment and a genuine plan of action to ensure that we reach the ambitious goal that the international community set for itself in 2000."

Mr. Deiss called for efforts to "reinstat[e]" the UN and its 192-member General Assembly to the centre of global governance.

"The challenges which we face today have acquired a global dimension and require global solutions. Our actions must have broad legitimacy and be the result of inclusive processes. We have to improve the mechanisms for information,

consultation and cooperation between the United Nations and other actors and tools of global governance," Mr. Deiss said.

He said Assembly members must also ensure that there is decisive action towards the internal reform of the UN.

"Reform of the Security Council remains important. We are all aware of the need for this reform. I would like us to be able to make progress on this matter, but it is for you, the Member States, to take decisions that enjoy broad support and make a convergence of views possible."

Changes to the UN should be made in a way that reflects its diverse membership, he said.

"It is essential that all stakeholders have a say and can participate in decision-making," Mr. Deiss told reporters later. He warned that the UN risked being marginalized by emerging international forums if it failed to effectively play its role as the central organ for international decision-making.

Other institutional issues during this session will be the review of the work of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Deiss said.

He stressed the need to promote sustainable development, saying that climate change, vulnerability to natural disasters and threats to biodiversity are some of the environmental challenges that affect all States and require a concerted effort from all countries.

"Environmental issues will figure prominently on our agenda, which includes the high-level meeting on biodiversity during the week of the summit on the MDGs.

"I believe that it is crucial to increase awareness of the need for economic structures that are more respectful of the environment and of future generations. For me 'green economy' does not mean 'new conditionality' but rather 'opportunity'. It is an opportunity to ensure sustainable development for the benefit of our planet, ourselves, our children and our grandchildren."

The President of the Assembly's just concluded 64th session, Ali Treki, highlighted some of its successes, including the finalizing of the outcome document for the three-day High-level Plenary Meeting on MDGs, which will begin next Monday.

"This summit will be a crucial opportunity not only to renew the commitment but to mobilize world-wide efforts in the coming years to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We must fulfil that pledge to lift the world out of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, social and economic inequalities, which will enable us to turn a new page in our efforts to achieve progress and sustainable development for all the peoples and regions of the world," Dr. Treki said.

He added he was gratified that the Assembly had been able, for the first time, to hold a high-level thematic debate on peacekeeping. "It was an excellent opportunity to consider the future of peacekeeping, including its political dimensions, the

interlinkages between peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and the nexus between security and development.”

He also noted that the General Assembly was progressively being reinvigorated.

“Investing in its continued revitalization is clearly in the interest of all. I would urge the entire membership to match the expressions of their support with concrete actions to ensure that the objectives are met,” Dr. Treki said.

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