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General Assembly chief highlights ‘satisfactory’ progress over past year



Joseph Deiss of Switzerland, holds his final news conference as General Assembly President

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The General Assembly has made progress over the past year in dealing with the issues of poverty reduction, global governance, a green economy and sustainable development, its outgoing President said today.

“I am satisfied with what has been achieved under these three main headings,” Joseph Deiss told the final news conference of his tenure, which ends on Monday.

On the first issue he noted that the Assembly’s 65th session opened with a world summit on the as the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)), the eight ambitious targets set at the UN

Millennium Summit in 2000 that aim to slash hunger and poverty, maternal and infant mortality, a host of diseases and lack of access to education and health care, all by 2015.

Development issues remained high on the agenda throughout the session and at a high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS the international community reaffirmed its commitment to fight the scourge, he added.

Turning to green issues, Mr. Deiss said progress has also been satisfactory, citing the high level meeting on biodiversity, the launching of the International Year of Forests, the debate on disaster risk reduction, and especially the thematic debate in June which improved the understanding of the concept of the green economy and its potential for sustainable economic growth and job creation.

Turning to global governance, Mr. Deiss highlighted informal debates with the Korean and French presidencies of the G20 aimed at bringing this group of industrialized and developing economies closer to the UN. “My hope is that this constructive dialogue will continue after the G20 Summit that will take place in Cannes [France] in November this year,” he said.

On Security Council reform, Mr. Deiss regretted that there had not been more rapid progress in starting “real negotiations” on expanding the 15-member body to keep up with changing world circumstances. The Council has not changed in decades, with five permanent members with veto powers – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – and 10 non-permanent members without veto elected for two-year terms.

The talks to reform it have been under way for more than 18 years. Only the Council’s resolutions are legally binding, while those of the Assembly are recommendations.

Mr. Deiss, from Switzerland, will be succeeded later this month by Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of Qatar as President of the 66th General Assembly.

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