

## **Assembly President calls on Member States to be 'brave enough' to move forward**



Joseph Deiss

29 September 2010 – The General Assembly wrapped up its opening annual session today with a fervent appeal from its President for Member States to show the courage needed to move beyond deadlock to achieve peace in the world's flashpoints and translate fine words on combating poverty into action.

"If our concerns are shared, why then have so many tragic situations lasted for so long?" Assembly President Joseph Deiss said in his **closing statement**. "Have we really taken the time to speak to one another, to search for solutions and to achieve reconciliation? Or have we merely been content to repeat the same things year after year?"

"Let us put aside electoral cycles and purely national interests so that we can forge consensus-based solutions that will enable us to move forward," he said, citing the need to consolidate the still fragile global economy and redouble efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (**MDGs**) that seek to slash poverty, hunger, maternal and infant mortality, disease and lack of access to education and health services, all by 2015.

"What we need now is for our words to be followed by actions," he declared. "Too often in the past, these words have gone unheeded. We cannot afford to disappoint the expectations of the millions of men, women and children living in poverty. We will need to close follow the fulfilment of our commitments. The General Assembly must – and will – contribute towards this."

Summarizing the speeches of the UN's 192 members, many of them delivered by heads of States or senior ministers, Mr. Deiss mentioned climate change, promoting human rights, combating terrorism, human trafficking and organized crime, disarmament and the efforts to bring peace and security in conflict zones.

"The essential role of the United Nations peacekeeping operations was repeatedly acknowledged," he declared. "We should never forget that peace and security are our primary calling. But the international community still has much to do to ensure that the United Nations fulfils its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security."

"The situation in the Middle East, Sudan, the Balkans and too many other regions of the world remind us of this on a daily basis. Will we be brave enough to move beyond deadlock and oft-repeated positions of principle and be sincere in our efforts to begin the reconciliation that our citizens so desire?"

Turning to the issue of global governance, an issue raised by many delegations, Mr. Deiss said there needs to be an ongoing and open dialogue between the Assembly and the G20 major industrialized and emerging economic powers. "I intend to launch an informal dialogue with the Secretary-General and the G20 host country to take place before and after the G20 summits," he added.

"We need to find the ideal combination of legitimacy and effectiveness. We must improve the machinery of information, consultation and cooperation between the United Nations and other players connected with global governance."

On reform of the world Organization itself, Mr. Deiss said everybody agreed on the importance of the tool of the UN, but "are we making best use of that tool? Are we doing what is needed to help us use it better?"

"Are we ready to strengthen our Organization today? Are we not in the process of re-creating the United Nations outside the United Nations by multiplying discussion forums and decision-making bodies? Would it not be better for us to act resolutely to adapt the Organization rapidly to current realities?"

He noted that essential reforms are already under way, especially with regard to revitalizing the Assembly and reforming the Security Council but also concerning the Human Rights Council and Peacebuilding Commission.

"We must move them forward. We must also reassert the value of the economic organizations of the United Nations and allow them fully to perform the functions for which they were created."

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