

# Priorities of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly



## **The President**

The President of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua, has laid out a set of priorities for the body to undertake over the course of the session. His speech at the opening of the session was highly focused on promoting the interests of the “dispossessed” in the world, setting forth an agenda of development and empowerment for those peoples, the main points of which are laid out below.

## **The Millennium Development Goals**

During the 63<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly Session, there will be a high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on September 25, 2008. At halfway to the deadline for achieving the MDGs, this event will be a forum for world leaders to review progress, identify gaps in implementation of plans, and commit to concrete efforts, resources and mechanisms to bridge those gaps. World leaders are asked to announce specific plans and proposals, which will help accelerate implementation and follow-through.

## **The Global Food Crisis**

As noted in Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann's speech, many nations in the world have felt the sting of the global food crisis, a problem that has imperiled gains made in achieving many of the Millennium Development Goals. It is no surprise then, that a problem impacting so many UN member states and so many UN priorities will be a prominent subject at this year's General Assembly Session.

The United Nations and its affiliates are working to address this crisis and significantly reduce the number of people suffering from hunger, in particular calling this a “historic opportunity to revitalize agriculture” as a means of fighting hunger and poverty in a sustainable way.

## **Climate Change**

The President of the General Assembly has called ours a “threatened planet,” and says that man has not upheld his duty as a steward of the Earth. This, along with the pervasive and global nature of the problem, paves the way for climate change to become a key topic of discussion at the General Assembly's 2008 Session.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has consistently stated that climate change is one of his top priorities and one of the top challenges the world faces. The UN has led the way in addressing climate change by raising awareness, promoting research and forging scientific consensus, mobilizing a global policy response through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and helping countries adapt to the impacts of warming.

## **The Joint United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)**

The atrocities that have taken place in Darfur are of concern to the entire world, the evidence of this being the mandate for the creation of what, at full deployment, would be the largest ever UN-led peacekeeping mission to help quell the alarming levels of violence taking place there. The mission however, has seen many obstacles, but despite delays in deployment, UNAMID continues to work to fulfill its mandate to

protect civilians, provide security for humanitarian aid channels, and support efforts toward political reconciliation. The General Assembly will certainly discuss the issue during its 63<sup>rd</sup> Session.

### **A Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy**

Terrorism has become an issue of concern to all UN member states, and will be a key agenda item at this year's General Assembly Session. The UN serves as a platform for combating international terrorism by bringing nations together to share resources and information, coordinate counter-terrorism activities, and to create frameworks for countries that are critical to the disruption and weakening of global terrorism.

### **Security Council Reform**

One of the General Assembly President's overarching themes for this Session will likely be reform of the UN Security Council. There is widespread consensus at the UN that the composition of the Security Council is long overdue for change, though the type and scope of change is often a point of debate among UN members.