

Statement of H.E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, during the Alliance of Civilizations Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends, 26 September 2009

President Sampaio,
Mr. Secretary General,
Foreign Ministers Miguel Moratinos and Ahmet Davutoglu,
Distinguished Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to thank President Sampaio, the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations for his kind invitation to be with you here today.

I am very pleased to participate in this Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations. This important initiative cohosted by Prime Minister Zapatero and Prime Minister Erdogan in 2005 was crucial in advancing dialogue and understanding between different civilizations and cultures.

We live in a world that is characterized by misgivings and misunderstandings between peoples from different parts of the globe. It is crucial that we all join hands in combating theories that target civilizations and religions, and arguments that promote a clash between them. This is essential to address the complex challenges and crises facing us today.

It is in this light that I proposed that the General Debate of the 64th Session should tackle the theme **“Effective responses to global crises - strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development”**.

Yesterday I attended the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace hosted by the Philippines. I believe that these and other similar initiatives and processes are making important contribution to our collective efforts to promote peace and security, harmony and development around the world.

We have heard calls from different quarters promoting such efforts. President Obama's June 2009 speech in Cairo was yet another call in that direction, reaching out to the Islamic world, aiming at removing mutual suspicion and discord, and promising a new beginning.

This Session of the General Assembly therefore is an ideal setting for providing a new momentum to the dialogue among civilizations. I am committed to promote this cause as one of my priorities, also taking into account that the year 2010 was declared as the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures by resolution 62/90 of 17 December 2007.

Let us work collectively for the success of this endeavour.

Thank you.