



General Assembly

Sixty-third session

86th plenary meeting

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New York

Official Records

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session

The President: In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138 of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session should be elected from among the African States.

In that connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of February 2009 that the Group has endorsed His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the presidency of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya elected by acclamation President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

Please allow me to congratulate my brother His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki, the Minister for African Union Affairs of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on his election as the President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

I know that Mr. Treki assumes this honour with the same passion and determination that have inspired my presidency. I am sure that his presidency will continue to press for the revitalization of this body as it seeks to restore its authority and leadership on the world stage during these perilous times.

I am reminded that our tenure in this position is brief. I assure the President-elect that I will be, with great pleasure, available to assist him and his team in any way he sees fit as he prepares for next September, so that the urgent work before us can proceed seamlessly into the next session. I trust that all of us will assist our Libyan brother as he prepares to assume the honour and responsibility of the Assembly presidency.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session, to take the floor.

Mr. Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to express my thanks and appreciation for the confidence that the General Assembly has placed in my country and in my person by electing me by acclamation President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. My special thanks are due to the African Group, which

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supported my nomination and provided me with encouragement. It is indeed my honour to represent the Group by assuming this important position.

This choice is a tribute to my country, its people and its leader. It is also an expression of appreciation for Libya's commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and its effective contribution to the realization of international peace and security, especially on my continent of Africa. However, at the same time, it places a moral commitment on our shoulders to further advancing the achievement of the United Nations purposes. For my part, I will make every possible effort to achieve those goals, in consultation and cooperation with all Member States.

I am truly happy to find myself once again among a large number of friends. I worked with many of them for many years in this Hall, and I will be honoured indeed to work with them again for an entire year.

I would like to thank my dear friend, President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for the frank and sincere way in which he has shared his experience with me. Undoubtedly, his cooperation with and advice to me during the transitional period will prove most important as I conduct the work of the sixty-fourth session. I take this opportunity to commend his efforts in leading the General Assembly to respond effectively to a large number of pressing issues.

I wish also to express my happiness with the welcome and encouragement bestowed upon me by my dear friend, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whom I have had the pleasure to know and whose admirable character I have appreciated for many years. I admire his leadership of the United Nations, his perseverance and his quick responses to the exigencies of urgent matters. I wish to reassure him that I will cooperate with him and benefit from his experience in seeking the best ways to address the priority issues facing the United Nations.

The world has gone through many cruel and bitter stages, including a phase of colonialism and slavery, which embodies oppression in its cruelest forms. The peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America were the victims. Successive wars were fought, chief among which were the First and Second World Wars. The peoples of small and large countries alike paid the highest price for those wars in terms of destruction,

material losses and hundreds of thousands of human lives lost.

Following the Second World War, the peoples of the world saw a glimmer of hope in the establishment of the United Nations as an end to their suffering and the beginning of a new era of security, peace, justice, equality and development. An era of decolonization and independence dawned for small nations, with the United Nations playing a major role in its achievement. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, ushering in a new era focused on respect for human individuals, their dignity and right to life. Despite the defects and shortcomings of the United Nations, it deserves to be commended for its many achievements, especially in the humanitarian field.

The countries that emerged victorious from the Second World War had the lion's share in leading the establishment of the United Nations. The Charter was drafted to give the victorious countries rights not accorded to other States. This represented a major defect, especially with respect to the Security Council. The world, however, has evolved considerably since then; criteria have changed and a multipolar structure has emerged. It is no longer possible for the United Nations, with a membership of 192 countries, to remain the Organization it was when it had only 50 Members. The need to reform the United Nations system has emerged, especially vis-à-vis the role of the General Assembly and the need to grant it full authority to shoulder its responsibilities in the march of human progress.

With the emergence of the United Nations, the peoples of the world believed that they would enjoy peace and prosperity. Regrettably, however, wars proliferated, although they have been confined mostly to the regional and local levels. Competition among the major Powers has played a role in their inflammation. Thousands, if not millions, of victims have fallen all over the world. Military expenditure has increased, and military budgets have risen into the trillions of dollars. The small countries have felt obliged to increase their military capabilities at the expense of their development and the welfare of their peoples. Weapons of mass destruction have proliferated and the entire world has felt threatened. Although the major Powers, which possess nuclear weapons, have called for disarmament, they have not set a good example for other countries by taking the initiative to dismantle their own weapons of mass destruction. Hence, the call

to discard weapons of mass destruction has been met with barely any response.

The exorbitant amounts spent on arms could have been spent to reduce poverty, fight diseases and assist poor peoples in the field of development. Millions of people suffer from hunger; hundreds of millions are deprived of their right to education and suffer from disease, with no access to medicine. Poverty rates have risen, with repercussions for small nations that have suffered greater instability as they experience military coups and rebel movements, hampering their development and increasing their torment. The world can enjoy no peace, being divided between poor and rich, with the gap between the two widening. Furthermore, peace cannot prevail in the world while some peoples live under foreign occupation and suffer the consequences of racism. Peace can prevail only within a framework of justice and respect for human rights regardless of one's religion, race, colour or nationality.

The time has come for us to understand that all wars are wrong and sinful. We should work together to avert war through the administration of justice in order to safeguard human lives and preserve human dignity. The only war worth relentlessly fighting, with the participation of all, is that against fatal diseases, poverty, hunger and illiteracy.

Undoubtedly, many challenges lie ahead that we must make a concerted effort to meet through the United Nations. United Nations reform in all its aspects — especially reform of the Security Council and revitalization of the General Assembly — must continue to be one of our priorities. We should make every effort to achieve it as soon as possible. Indeed, the realization of peace and security through the administration of justice and putting an end to wars is a core purpose of the United Nations. It is a responsibility to be shouldered by all Member States.

Furthermore, we have no choice but to continue to address the issue of climate change firmly and effectively through cooperation among Member States in order to make the General Assembly an effective instrument for successfully advancing the current negotiations on climate change and for establishing a new framework for our future work based on our achievements to date and our envisaged goals.

The world financial and economic crisis remains of major concern and requires greater effort in the

search for new, effective methods to tackle the crisis, mitigate its impact and achieve sustainable economic growth and development, taking into account the negative effects of the crisis on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, especially in our continent, Africa.

It is imperative that we stand firmly for the realization of human rights. Such an undertaking cannot be achieved solely through rhetorical statements, but requires the provision of the basic necessities for a dignified life, such as food, medicine, clean drinking water, educational and health services and the means to fight dangerous diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. We can do so only through solidarity and joint coordination so as to create a better world in which all enjoy peace, security, and a decent standard of living, and in which the basic rights and freedom of all are respected.

As I have been chosen to preside over the next session of the General Assembly, I would like to assure all Members that I will be at their disposal in our joint effort to enhance and strengthen the United Nations and its bodies. I count on the assistance and cooperation of every Member of the United Nations and will not align myself with any party or group. My only alignment will be with justice, security, peace and the common interests of the entire international community. I will cooperate with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for the common good.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I congratulate His Excellency Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Instead of welcoming him, I should really welcome him back. Our new President is already very familiar with the United Nations. He has already served three times as his country's United Nations Ambassador, most recently in 2003. His other diplomatic assignments have placed him at the heart of the United Nations agenda, and, in his current capacity as Libya's Minister for African Union Affairs, he has been working on pressing matters of mutual concern to the United Nations and the African Union, including Darfur.

That wide-ranging diplomatic experience will be invaluable as he presides over the General Assembly. From climate change to hunger, from the economic

crisis to the urgent need to reach the Millennium Development Goals, the Assembly will be challenged to forge new levels of international cooperation to solve our common problems. My own experience tells me that the Assembly can rise to that challenge. Members will recall that I served as Chef de Cabinet to the President of the General Assembly in 2001 and 2002. That session convened at a time of international upheaval. Despite the turmoil, Member States were able to achieve consensus on many important issues.

Now, as we face new problems and threats, Minister Treki's leadership will be crucial if the Assembly is to respond with unified action. We must also keep adapting and improving our Organization to better live up to the ideas of the Charter and the demands of the times.

I congratulate our current President, His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, on his valuable contribution, and I anticipate a smooth transition to the new leadership of the General Assembly. I look forward to working closely with the President-elect and the entire membership towards our shared goal of a more effective United Nations so that we can better serve the people who need us most.

I congratulate the President-elect once again on his election and I wish him every success as he takes up his formidable responsibilities.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Swaziland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Nhleko (Swaziland): I would like to say a few words with the understanding that the issue will be dealt with in our next formal meeting. On behalf of the African Group, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep condolences to the Government and the people of Gabon on the loss of President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba. We also pray that God Almighty will reach out to the family in this hour of bereavement. May his soul rest in peace.

It is my singular honour to address this Assembly on behalf of the African Group on yet another day of triumph of the international system. I have the further honour to extend my warm congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, a true son of

Africa, on his election by acclamation as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

The election of Mr. Treki marks the true commitment of his country, Libya, and, by extension, of the African continent, to the United Nations system and to the virtues of multilateralism. His richly decorated experience and highly illustrious career in the international setting speak for themselves. He has been a true soldier in the struggle for the common good, firm in his resolve to carry out his duties with the utmost integrity. The fact that Mr. Treki has served in New York at various points in time is testimony that his election could not have come at a better time. Mr. Treki's experience will be placed on a higher level of engagement, and I trust that the principles of multilateralism and solemn commitment to international collectivity will be given added impetus.

The President-elect has come at a time of immense anxiety in the world. Economies are dwindling, financial systems are crumbling and poverty levels are reaching record highs. Solutions are being sought through different perspectives at all levels of decision-making and many times there are different perspectives on how best to solve our most common problems. Generally, the plot is thickening. This is a time of reckoning. It is definitely not a time to consider self-interest. In that regard, we have full confidence that the President-elect will work through these challenges with confidence, tenacity and fortitude.

On behalf of the African Group, I would like to reach out to Mr. Treki and assure him of the full cooperation of the Group as he carries out his day-to-day duties. In the same vein, I trust that other formations in the United Nations will do the same, with a view to ensuring the best cooperation that can be achieved. For this reason, the African Group wishes Mr. Treki all success as he navigates the troubled waters of our challenging world and reaffirms its active participation in all initiatives that seek to better the lives of our people, whom we represent.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Al-Jarman (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States and to congratulate the President-elect of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam

Treki, Minister for African Union Affairs and former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Chairman of the African Union Executive Council and representative of the Group of African States. His election by acclamation today is a clear reflection of our full confidence in his ability to lead our work and confirmation of his vast experience and exceptional qualifications, which will enhance his leadership of the General Assembly at its forthcoming session.

The sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly will convene in September 2009, at a time when the international community is facing new challenges and difficulties resulting from the aggravated global financial and economic crisis, in addition to other ongoing issues and challenges which hold great importance for the international community. Those include, inter alia, reform of the United Nations, in particular reform of the Security Council and its relationship with the General Assembly, climate change, food security, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and the eradication of poverty and disease. These raise considerable obstacles to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. They are all issues we will continue to address during the sixty-fourth session.

The Asian Group is fully confident that the President-elect, His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki, has the necessary multidimensional experience and qualifications to successfully lead Member States through the important and complex issues they are facing and to maintain the momentum in order to attain the main objectives of this body: lasting peace, security and prosperity for all the peoples of the world. I wish to assure the President-elect that the Asian Group will extend its full support to him as he discharges his duties as President of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We wish him every success in his new mission.

Finally, on behalf of the Asian Group, I take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to the current President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his tireless efforts and commitment during the sixty-third session. His extensive skill, wise leadership and dedication have been essential for the success of the current session of the General Assembly during this important and sensitive phase of its work.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Tašovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on his election as President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session. The election of Mr. Ali Treki as President of the Assembly for its sixty-fourth session is not only recognition of his outstanding personal qualities and experience, but also of his unrelenting efforts to make our world a better place.

We are fully convinced that in assuming the complexity and the responsibility of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, which we have entrusted to him, his political and diplomatic experience and leadership skills will contribute to successful management of a number of important and vital ongoing reforms that have become imperative to the future of the Organization and of the international community.

On behalf of the Eastern European Group, I would like to assure Mr. Treki that our Group stands ready to support his initiatives and assist him in all his undertakings to further strengthen the United Nations and to attain the objectives set out in the United Nations Charter, within a framework of transparency and full respect for all views and positions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of El Salvador, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. García González (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, to express our most sincere congratulations to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, Minister for African Union Affairs of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on his election by acclamation to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki is an experienced diplomat who has served in many posts of importance for his country's international relations, including at the United Nations.

For that reason, we are convinced that his leadership and negotiating skills will contribute to

achieving major advances for peace and security, development, international cooperation, respect and promotion of human rights, reform of the United Nations and protection of the environment, among other prominent issues on the agenda of the sixty-fourth session.

In addition, in the context of the unprecedented financial and economic crisis confronting the world today, and given the flaws and gaps in international financial governance, our regional group believes that it is important and urgently needed for the General Assembly to take a leading and proactive role in finding a solution to this crisis and in international economic affairs.

Developing countries, including those of Latin America and the Caribbean, bear the burden of a crisis for which they are not responsible, but which nevertheless is leading to major setbacks to the economic and financial stability of those countries and jeopardizing the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

In this context, our regional group trusts that the President-elect of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, will rise to the challenge of the circumstances and guide us appropriately in navigating these and other challenges that we will face during the forthcoming session.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the current Minister for African Union Affairs of his country on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Mr. Treki has served his country and the African region with distinction and will bring extensive political experience to the leadership of the General Assembly — leadership that will build confidence among Member States and different groupings. This will be important for bringing the reform process forward and in dealing with a host of challenging issues facing the international community today.

We look forward to continuing to work with incumbent President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann and will assist to the best of our endeavours in ensuring a smooth transition until our new President takes over in September. We assure the President-elect of our full support in his important duties of serving Member States and we wish him every success in doing so.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain, who will speak on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I welcome the opportunity to address the Assembly today on behalf of the Arab Group to warmly congratulate the President-elect of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, Minister for African Union Affairs of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and representative of the African Group, which has put its full confidence in him to represent them in this Assembly. The members of the Arab Group are also proud of the fact that Mr. Treki is part of their Group, as his country is at the crossroads of two worlds: the African and the Arab. We believe that his election today will serve to further strengthen these links.

Mr. Treki's election by acclamation of the Member States demonstrates their full confidence in his abilities and in his lengthy political and diplomatic experience as a former Minister for Foreign Affairs and in other important positions that amply qualify him for his new post.

The upcoming session of the General Assembly will be held at a major turning point. The reform process of the United Nations, especially the reform of the Security Council and its relationship with the General Assembly, among others, continues to be the focus of major interest for all Member States. This reform is, as I said, a turning point in the history of our international Organization, which faces crucial challenges for the future, especially the need to promote international peace and security, including the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East through the implementation of the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant international resolutions. We will also have to face other challenges, especially the international economic crisis, climate change, food security, reduction in nuclear stockpiles and the fight against poverty and disease, all of which are of great

concern to humankind and call for our unrelenting efforts.

The key role that the President of the General Assembly can play in promoting the agenda of the international community will enable us to respond to all of these challenges. He is well prepared to fulfil his noble mission thanks to his lengthy experience, his leadership and his clear vision, qualities that we have witnessed in Mr. Treki throughout the long decades of his international diplomatic career. We trust that the President-elect will give all of these issues the greatest attention and will direct the work of the sixty-fourth session with vigour thanks to his in-depth knowledge of all of these issues and his wealth of experience. These traits make him well able to address these issues at the international, regional and national levels.

The Arab Group will fully support the President-elect in the fulfilment of his role as head of an Assembly that represents all Member States. We thank the President of the sixty-third session of the Assembly for his tireless efforts throughout the session. His wisdom and his ability were the key to achieving positive results in recent months.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 4.

Drawing of lots for the seating protocol for the sixty-fourth regular session

The President: As announced in the *Journal*, we will now proceed to the drawing of lots to determine

the Member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-fourth session. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretary-General draws the name of one Member State from a box containing the names of the States members of the General Assembly. The delegation whose name has been drawn will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall, and the other countries will follow in English alphabetical order. The same order will be observed in the Main Committees.

I now invite the Secretary-General to proceed with the drawing of lots.

Having been drawn by lot by the Secretary-General, Cambodia was chosen to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-fourth session.

The President: I wish to inform members that, immediately after the adjournment of this meeting, consecutive meetings of the First Committee, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and the Second, Third, Fifth and Sixth Committees will be held in this Hall to elect the members of their respective Bureaux.

Thereafter, the General Assembly will hold its 87th plenary meeting, to elect the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.