



**MESSAGE OF H.E. MIGUEL D'ESCOTO BROCKMANN,  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE DAY AND AWARDS CEREMONY  
NEW YORK 23 JUNE 2009**

I am pleased to welcome you to the United Nations to celebrate the 7th Public Service Day and to recognize the winners and finalists of the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service: the United Nations Public Service Awards.

Promoting sound governance and effective public administration for the political, economic and social development of all nations is fundamental to the work of the United Nations. It is also among the main objectives of the United Nations Programme on Public Administration and Development. Since its inception in 1948, Programme has built an impressive track record of assistance to Member States in streamlining their public service institutions and in strengthening the necessary governance mechanisms for forging and enhancing accountability.

In 2003, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 23 June as United Nations Public Service Day, thus highlighting the importance of public service and support for the United Nations Programme on Public Administration and Development. At the same time, the Economic and Social Council established the United Nations Public Service Awards to celebrate the value and virtue of servicing citizens.

Sound public administration and effective governance are much like air. When it is readily available, fresh and pure, we often take it for granted. Only when it becomes polluted and we can no longer breathe comfortably, we realize how indispensable it is in our lives. In fact, they can make the difference between life and death for our more vulnerable citizens.

This is especially true today because we are faced with the simultaneous challenges of the economic and financial crisis, climate change, food insecurity and public health pandemics. Together with other problems, these crises are jeopardizing our capacity, in industrialized and developing countries alike, to ensure the wellbeing of our citizens. They are slowing the progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Tackling and overcoming this multitude of crises require a competent, accountable, transparent and effective State. At the core of such State is a citizen-centric and efficient public service.

Therefore, let us all, on Public Service Day 2009, acknowledge the crucial role played by civil servants around the world, and do our utmost to ensure that they can continue to make their full contributions to excellence in public service. I offer my admiration and gratitude to those recipients of the Public Service Awards who are being honoured today.