



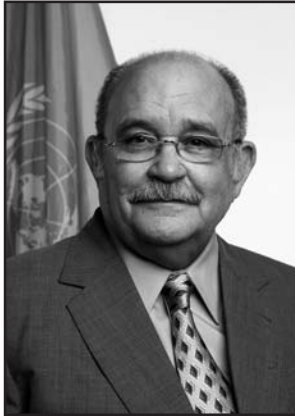
United Nations



Sixty-third
session of the
General Assembly

To convene on
16 September 2008

Biographical
note



H.E. Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, M.M.

President of the sixty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly

H.E. Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, M.M., was elected President of the sixty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly on 4 June 2008.

A veteran statesman, politician, community leader and priest, Father d'Escoto served for over a decade as the Republic of Nicaragua's Minister for Foreign Affairs, a post he held from July 1979 until April 1990. During his tenure, he played a key role in the Contadora and Esquipulas peace processes to end internal armed conflicts in Central America in the 1980s. Also at that time, he spearheaded his Government's decision, in 1984, to bring to the International Court of Justice a claim against the United States for supporting military and paramilitary actions against his country, with the Court subsequently ruling in favour of Nicaragua.

Father d'Escoto is currently Senior Adviser on Foreign Affairs, with the rank of Minister, to President Daniel Ortega Saavedra, a post which he has held since 2007. He also chairs Nicaragua's National Committee on Water, in which capacity he plays a leading role in efforts to conserve Lake Cocibolca, the largest source of water in Mesoamerica. He is a member of the Sandinista National Council and the Political Commission, the highest governing body of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

Ordained a priest of the Maryknoll Missionaries in the early 1960s, Father d'Escoto has travelled extensively, visiting most of the world's capitals, as well as many remote and less accessible areas of the globe, and has dedicated much of his life to helping the poor. In 1963, he founded the National Institute of Research and Population Action (INAP) in Chile, aimed at empowering the disadvantaged populations of the *callampas* or slum neighbourhoods on the periphery of Santiago and other cities, through community action in defence of labour rights. Following the earthquake that devastated the capital city of Managua (Nicaragua) in December 1972, Father d'Escoto mobilized assistance for quake victims and, in 1973, established the Nicaraguan Foundation for Integral Community Development (FUNDECI), now one of the oldest and most prestigious non-governmental organizations in Nicaragua.

In 1970, Father d'Escoto assumed responsibility for Maryknoll's Social Communications Department at its headquarters in New York, where he

founded Orbis Books. The publishing arm of Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Orbis quickly became a leader in religious publishing, offering works on spirituality, theology and current affairs, often from a Third World perspective. Later, while living in New York, Father d'Escoto was one of the founders of the "*Grupo de los Doce*" (Group of 12), composed of progressive, democratic intellectuals and professionals who supported the FSLN in its struggle to overthrow the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua. He was appointed Foreign Minister of Nicaragua shortly after Somoza's downfall.

Inspired by the lives and works of such personalities as Leo Tolstoy, M. K. Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dorothy Day, Father d'Escoto is an advocate of multilateralism and respect for international law, and is deeply committed to the principles of active nonviolence, solidarity and social justice, which, together with a deep sense of ethics, have formed the basis of his political life.

Father d'Escoto is the recipient of numerous awards, such as: the Order of Cardinal Miguel Obando Bravo (2007), the highest honour awarded by the Catholic University *Redemptoris Mater* (UNICA), for his work for peace; the Thomas Merton Award (1987), for his commitment to world peace; the Order of Carlos Fonseca Amador (1986), the FSLN's highest honour, for his contributions to international law; the International Lenin Peace Prize (1985/86) awarded by the Soviet Union; the Julio Cortázar Prize for Peace and Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean (1985), awarded by Argentina's Institute of International Relations; and the Alfonso Comín Peace Prize (first recipient, Barcelona, Spain, 1984), which he accepted on behalf of the Nicaraguan people. In June of this year, Father d'Escoto received the unanimous endorsement of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) within the United Nations as its candidate for the Presidency of the sixty-third General Assembly of the United Nations.

Born in Los Angeles, California, in 1933, Miguel d'Escoto spent his childhood years in Nicaragua, but returned to the United States in 1947 to study. He entered the Catholic seminary at Maryknoll (New York) in 1953, and in 1961 was ordained a priest. In 1962, he obtained a Master's of Science from Columbia University's School of Journalism (Pulitzer Institute).