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Mr. President,

Malta would like to take this opportunity to salute and thank the U.N. Secretary General for his unstinting efforts in guiding our Organization in the maintenance of international peace and stability worldwide. Under his leadership the U.N. has made important strides in raising awareness and in many instances to respond effectively to the critical situation of the poor and more vulnerable.

It is therefore with great satisfaction for my Government and that of the Maltese People for having had the honor and the privilege to welcome the Secretary General in Malta last April.

Mr. President,

This year Malta is marking three important anniversaries. The first is the Forty-fifth Anniversary of Malta's Independence on 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1964, the second is the Fifteenth Anniversary of the entry into force of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change on 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1994 and the third anniversary is the Fifteenth Anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on 16<sup>th</sup> of November 1994.

Over the last 45 years, Malta has made good on its pledge when it joined this Organization. In this regard, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to renew today, on this 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Malta's U.N. membership, our pledge and our unwavering faith and trust in the ideals and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

One of the issues which in the coming weeks will be on top of the international agenda is the Copenhagen Summit. Two days ago, this Assembly Hall witnessed one of the largest ever gathering of Heads of State and Heads of Government to debate the future of our planet Earth. During this unique Summit we all agreed that the challenges posed by climate change have become the most urgent and critical faced by humankind.

It will be recalled that when in 1988, Malta took the initiative to formally table the issue of climate change as a political item on the agenda of the Forty-Third Session of the UN General Assembly, few of us would have thought at that time that this issue of climate change would become in the span of two decades one of the principal critical issues dominating the international environmental concerns of this new century. Malta has throughout these twenty years been in the forefront to ensure that climate change continues to become one of the top priority issues of our times. Malta's commitment of 20 years ago remains steadfast and as strong as ever.

As we have heard during the past few days, the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit must signal a turning point. Malta strongly believes that it is the duty of all countries, large and small, rich and poor, to contribute their fair share in this concerted effort which must be global if it is to succeed.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of November of this year, Member states will be commemorating the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the entry into force of the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, which has been described as the Constitution for regulating humankind's activities of the Oceans. It was forty-two years ago that, in this Assembly Hall, Malta once again had called on UN Member States to undertake a reform of the Law of the Sea which eventually culminated in the adoption of the Convention on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1982. It is also necessary to see the 1982 Convention in the light of some pressing contemporary urgent problems which are either addressed inadequately, or not addressed at all.

Among these deficiencies are the provisions dealing with piracy, for example, illicit traffic in narcotic drugs or psychotropic substance, the rules relating to the protection and preservation of the marine environment, and the rules dealing with submarine cables and pipelines. Examples of omissions are the trafficking of human beings, the safety and security of navigation, the transportation of weapons of mass destruction, and climate change.

So in the light of issues I have just mentioned, Malta feels that the time has come for the U.N. General Assembly to examine possible approaches to a review of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention. In this context, Malta would like to propose that the UN General Assembly, through its relevant bodies, undertakes appropriate consultations among its Member States to revise the Convention in the view of the passage of time and the emergence of new and critical issues over the years. My delegation will be ready to enter into consultations with other interested Member States to advance further this proposal.

Mr. President,

Just as it was necessary in 1948 to recognize the need for a universal declaration of human rights, as a fundamental condition for the enjoyment of freedom, justice and peace for all men and women around the world, so it has become vital now, today, to have a concomitant declaration on human duties of the present generation as well as our responsibilities towards future generations.

We have the overall task of conserving the human species in the sacredness of its life and in its continuity, as well as of preserving the environment, in all its manifestations. We believe that such a declaration emanates naturally from that doctrine of the common heritage of mankind which my country, in 1967, first mooted to this Assembly, eventually leading to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.