



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE 69TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY GENERAL DEBATE BY PRESIDENT JACOB
ZUMA OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

NEW YORK, USA

24 September 2014

Your Excellency, Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the General Assembly,

Your Excellency, Mr. Ban ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Your Majesties,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegations,

I would like to congratulate you Mr. President and your country Uganda on assuming on behalf of the continent of Africa the responsibility to the President of this august body for the 69th session.

The theme that you have chosen for this general debate and the 69th session Mr President, namely, *"Delivering on and implementing the Post 2015 Development Agenda"*, is timely and most appropriate.

Fourteen years ago, world leaders adopted the Millenium Declaration that contained the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs).

The MDGs galvanised and mobilised the international community and the United Nations in a manner never seen before.

We have good stories to tell in terms of the journey of the past fourteen years of implementing the MDGs.

In Africa, we seized the opportunity and adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), our socio-development blueprint.

The African Union's Vision 2063 will, together with NEPAD, and other socio-economic development programmes, be the cornerstone and foundation of Africa's Development Agenda going forward.

South Africa has also made significant progress in achieving the MDGs.

Reducing by half the number of people earning less than a dollar a day has been achieved, while the share of those experiencing hunger has also been halved.

South Africa has attained Goal 2 of providing access to primary education access for all.

On official international indicators, South Africa is doing well on MDG 3, to promote and empower women.

South Africa has recorded impressive progress through the expansion of health infrastructure and improved access to health services for all South Africans.

On the reduction of child mortality, MDG4, and the improvement of maternal health, MDG5, significant progress has been recorded, but more work remains.

In fact, more work remains worldwide to fully achieve these goals, especially in the developing world.

We have to confront those underlying root causes that continue to make it impossible for our people to have a better life.

In spite of the progress that we have made thus far, reports continue to show that Africa is lagging behind in terms of the attainment of some of the MDGs.

It is for this reason that we appreciate the crafting of a post- 2015 Global Development Agenda that will carry forward the unfinished business of the MDGs.

The post-2015 Global Development Agenda will provide a frame of reference for our collective agreement on what has to be done.

We reiterate that developed countries should be reliable partners and meet their commitment to development goals, such as contributing 0,7 percent of their gross national income towards Official Development Assistance.

It does not matter what this great Organisation has achieved in the past six decades, if we do not deal comprehensively with the scourge of poverty, underdevelopment and diseases, the poor of the World will consider everything to have been a failure.

Indeed we would have failed in our duty if we succeed in preventing another World war but continue to have children dying of malnutrition and treatable diseases.

The recent outbreak of Ebola in some West African States and the number of lives that have been unnecessarily lost is one clear example of the challenges that developing countries continue to contend with.

We believe that Ebola would have been contained within a few days had it been an outbreak in the developed World.

But it has become a pandemic that threatens the economies of affected African States.

The outbreak has thus exposed the challenges of capacity, lack of infrastructure and other limited resources in Africa.

We are pleased that the United Nations under the leadership of the Secretary General is deploying a Mission to coordinate efforts to combat the virus.

South Africa stands ready to continue to provide whatever resources at our disposal to assist the people and governments of our sister countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

We add our voice in calling for more resources to be deployed to ensure that the virus is contained.

Mr President,

The role of the United Nations in supporting the struggles of self-determination and freedom has been remarkable. South Africa is a shining example.

Twenty years ago, President Nelson Mandela thanked all nations for support in this very podium when South Africa was readmitted to the United Nations as a free and democratic state.

We are reminded of this fact on this important day which is National Heritage Day in my country.

Since 1994 South Africa has made significant progress in transforming the apartheid state into a democratic one founded on the values of human dignity, non-discrimination, non-racialism and non-sexism, the rule of law, and universal adult suffrage as enshrined in the Constitution.

Given our history and heritage, we are mindful of our historic and moral responsibility in the global struggle against racism, racial discrimination and other intolerances.

We will in this regard, continue to be at the forefront of efforts to eliminate all forms of racism, racial discrimination and any other intolerance including xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

The Durban Declaration and its Programme of Action remain the primary Framework ever adopted by a UN Conference in the fight against racism.

We will continue to support the struggles for freedom and self-determination, including the struggles of the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara who continue to experience occupation and colonialism of different forms.

The people of Cuba also hold a special place in our hearts because of that country's sacrifice for African freedom. We will therefore continue to support their struggle for economic liberation.

Mr President

While the UN has done remarkably well in the supporting self-determination, when it celebrates 70 years of existence next year, this august body may be found wanting by the people of Palestine.

The Israeli-Palestine question is one of the oldest items on the UN agenda but progress remains elusive.

In the past few months in particular, the world has witnessed a devastating conflict that left a humanitarian crisis of shocking proportions.

The people of Palestine were left homeless, with no medical facilities, no safe drinking water, bereaved and having to care for the wounded after a trail of destructive military actions by Israel.

South Africa has condemned the actions of both Israel and Hamas and we have called for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

Our strongly held view is that there can be no military solution to the Israeli-Palestinian question.

We should all remain committed to the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders with Palestine and Israel co-existing side by side in peace.

Of concern in this matter has been the helplessness displayed by the UN, especially the UN Security Council, during the current conflict.

The UN has the moral authority and legitimacy to unite the world in promoting the quest for peace, justice and self-determination for the people of Palestine, while addressing whatever security concerns that Israel may have.

This august body must play this role without fear or favour and be a beacon for all who suffer oppression in the world.

Mr President,

Let me reiterate that the 70th anniversary of the UN next year provides an opportunity for us to seriously reflect on the need to reform this august body, moving beyond words to action.

Ten years ago world leaders celebrating the 60th anniversary of the UN agreed on the need for reform of the United Nations Security Council in particular.

The decision remains valid and must be implemented.

When we converge here next year, on the 70th year of the UN, we should be able to adopt a concrete programme that will guide us towards a strengthened UN and a reformed Security Council.

Some contentious aspects of the UN system such as the veto powers and the exclusion of regions such as Africa in the Security Council are some of the critical matters that cannot be ignored in the quest for transformation.

Mr President,

Among the achievements of the UN in its recent history is the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, particularly since the formation of the AU Peace and Security architecture.

In this regard the full implementation of Security Council Resolutions 1809 and 2033 on Cooperation between the UN and Regional Organisations particularly the AU, remains crucial.

In a number of areas where this cooperation is in place progress has been made, for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The two affected sub-regional organisations, SADC and the Great Lakes region, continue to make significant strides with the support of the United Nations.

Mr President

This august body celebrated the formation of a new state of South Sudan recently.

The recent developments and the ongoing conflict in South Sudan has resulted in loss of life and dire humanitarian consequences.

We will continue to contribute as much as we can to finding solutions working with the AU and this august body. South Sudan should not be allowed to regress.

Mr President,

Next year marks twenty years since the Beijing Conference which adopted the Beijing Platform for Action.

The anniversary provides an opportunity for the UN and the international community to reflect and take forward the struggle for the emancipation of women from all forms of discrimination.

Mr President,

Last December the world descended on South Africa to pay last respects to our beloved Madiba. Those who did not come to South Africa honoured Madiba in various ways.

We will continue to work with the world to promote Madiba's legacy and passion for justice, freedom, equality and human rights.

We are grateful to the General Assembly and the President of the previous session, for the decision to establish *the United Nations Nelson Mandela Prize* that will be awarded to an outstanding individual who will have demonstrated a commitment to the aim, objectives and principles of the UN Charter.

The Prize is a great testament to the outstanding individual that Madiba was and will always be.

Excellencies, Your Majesties,

As we recommit to the Millennium Development Goals, let me once again, borrow from the words of Madiba uttered on his historic inauguration day in 2009 when he said;

"We understand it still, that there is no easy road to freedom.

We know it well, that none of us acting alone can achieve success.

We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world.

Let there be justice for all.

Let there be peace for all.

Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.

Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfil themselves".

I thank you.