



REPÚBLICA DE CABO VERDE



62nd SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**SPEECH BY
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**“CLIMATE CHANGES and the challenges of development in the
context of insularity”**

New York, September 28, 2007

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Excellency, President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly,

Excellency, Secretary General of the United Nations,

Excellencies, Heads of Delegations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

While we commend the United Nations for having chosen **Climate Changes** as the theme for this 62nd Session of the General Assembly, at the same time, we recall that many countries in the South, have been, for the past decades, warning the international community about this phenomenon that is being experienced, here and there, through the drama of the droughts and desertification. Climate changes have multiple causes. Some natural and others originated by human actions. Therefore, the responsibilities of states and societies at the origin of these changes are not equal. Nor are the impacts they have on the lives of the common citizen. Likewise, we don't have the same scientific, technological or financial means to prevent the negative effects of climate changes.

At this point, I would like to say a few words about drought and desertification, which illustrate, in an unquestionable manner, the climate changes in the West African sub-region. Needless to mention is their devastating impact on the economic and social life of the populations. Unfortunately, in spite of the Conferences, the pretentious conclusions and declarations, the repeated calls from the Sahel have received mitigated and inconstant responses. In view of the profound implications of this stance in the lives of populations and States, some depict it as international resign.

Climate changes are, without any doubt, a world challenge of multiple reaches and a restructuring factor of the economic, social and political life. Most likely, we will have wasted too much time in discussions that had the ability of delaying the global acceptance of the problem and, consequently, the formulation of strategies for adaptation and mitigation.

Mr. President,

In brief words, I would like to underline the catastrophic effects, both present and future, of climate changes and, more specifically, of drought and desertification on **Small Island States**. If the projections on the sea level rise prove to be true, we will be facing a disaster of unimaginable proportions.

My country, Cape Verde, an archipelago of reduced physical and demographic dimensions, is one of the small island states and one that has been faced with drought, desertification and almost uninterrupted dramatic water shortages for more than three decades.

Indeed, Cape Verde, given its location, size, landscape and the insular and archipelagic characteristic of its territory, is a case of convergence and concentration of the negative effects of climate changes.

The impact of drought and desertification on the income of families and on the poverty level is unquestionable. On the other hand, they undermine government efforts and strongly condition the mobilization and allocation of resources for development financing.

In light of the challenges of climate changes, one should recall the leading role of the United Nations has had and continues to have in congregating efforts in raising awareness toward this critical problem for the future of mankind.

We are convinced that the Bali Conference will set new parameters based on the principle of equity and on the legitimate aspirations of the populations to development and on the differentiation of responsibilities of each and everyone.

We, therefore, call on the United Nations Organization to pursue its efforts in this area and dedicate very special attention to small Island States who are confronted with multiple fragilities and vulnerabilities.

It is imperative to resume and implement the **Mauritius Strategy of Implementation** aimed at accelerating the **application of the Barbados Plan of Action for Small Island Developing States**.

*The Community of Nations cannot but acknowledge that, given its origins, its role throughout History, small island States are a "**Heritage of Mankind**".*

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

In spite of its structural vulnerabilities and undeniable lack of natural resources, **Cape Verde** has, since its independence in 1975, trailed a positive and constant path to development. It is in this context, that we should consider and outline Cape Verde's graduation, or, in other words, its withdrawal from the group of Least Developed Countries as of 2008.

We are strongly committed to overcome this new development stage, through audacious strategies and decisions to transform the country. We are quite aware that the main responsibility in Cape Verde's development process rests in the hands of the Capeverdean Government and citizens. This is the spirit that guided us in the past and that will allow us to face the challenges of graduation. Nevertheless, during the transition period we should be able to count on the **strong partnership from the international community** to face Cape Verde's structural and new vulnerabilities.

In this regard, I call for a special attention from the United Nations and Member States to the Declaration of the Transition Support Group and to the report that the Government will soon deliver to the Secretary General in accordance with the General Assembly Resolution on graduation, dated December 2004.

While it is true that our development strategy is open, daring and driven by the concern of creating spaces and opportunities for foreign direct investments, it is no less true that today, more than ever, we need innovative modalities of aid and financing, more adjusted to the pace we want to set for Cape Verde's development and to the imperatives of the transition.

It is high time we shift from the discourse to the practice of ownership, in accordance with the spirit of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness.

Mr. President,

Allow me to also briefly recall the trans-border and global characteristics of many of the modern day phenomena.

I'm referring to climate changes and, of course, to **terrorism**, to **organized crime** and to the different kinds of **trafficking** which represent a threat to human security and to the Democratic Rule of Law itself, as they corrupt values, compromise development and thwart the most legitimate expectations of peoples.

We are living in a time when **problems and threats are of concern to all**.

They are not confined to one State or one specific region.

Nor are there local solutions to the global threats of our era.

Responses to these issues will not be effective unless within a robust, balanced and fair **multilateral perspective**.

The UN is, and should continue to be, the basis, the guarantor and the congregating center for multilateralism.

We are strongly convinced that **the future of the World and of the ideals of peace, security and development entails strengthening the United Nations**.

And we are all faced with the challenge of translating the statements reiterated by the international community into practices that are coherent and consistent. It is a question of credibility for the world that is watching us.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I could not conclude without extending my greetings, congratulations and encouragement to the **Secretary General** and wishing him the success in guiding this house, our common organization, for the full accomplishment of its founding goals and

the imperatives of efficiency, modernization and democratization of its functioning.

Likewise, I would like to extend warm greetings to the **President of this 62nd Session** and assure him of our confidence, while certain that he will be able to face the important challenges of this General Assembly with serenity and sense of duty.

THANK YOU for your attention!