

GHANA



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STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. JOHN AGYEKUM KUFUOR
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**AT THE 62ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS**

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Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me first congratulate you on your election as President of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that we are in capable hands with you at the helm of affairs of this august Assembly as you will bring your excellent diplomatic skills to bear on our work. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, Mrs. Sheikha Haja Rashed Al Khalifa of Bahrain for the able manner with which she presided over the 61st session of the General Assembly.

At the time of Ghana's independence fifty years ago, there were only 8 African member states of the United Nations, some of whom co-sponsored this Assembly's unanimous resolution to formally admit Ghana to membership of the United Nations. In applying for membership, the Government of Ghana declared its full acceptance of the obligations of the UN Charter and undertook to carry them out.

The people and Government of Ghana do profoundly appreciate the fact that their unrelenting dedication and commitment to the principles, purposes and ideals of the UN within their 50 years of nationhood was recognized and rewarded by the member states through the election and re-election of the illustrious son of Ghana, Kofi Annan, who retired recently after having made a lasting contribution to the transformation of the UN in many significant aspects.

Mr. President, lest we forget the circumstances of the birth of the UN, which was born out of war, we should not take the existence of the UN for granted because it remains indispensable for the advancement of peace and progress and the eradication of poverty, disease and the promotion of human rights and sustainable development. Ghana still has abiding faith in the founding purposes and principles of the UN and is ever ready to continue to cooperate with other member states for the welfare of all human kind.

In July this year, Ghana had the honour and privilege of hosting the 9th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in Accra with an agenda devoted solely to the quest to deepen the political and economic integration of Africa through the establishment of a continental union government with the ultimate aim of accelerating the development of the peoples of Africa. After very fruitful deliberations, I am encouraged to state our firm resolve of taking the necessary steps in achieving this laudable objective.

Recognizing that our efforts at accelerated development will be more effective and successful in an atmosphere of peace and security, the resolution and in particular, the prevention of conflicts on the continent, are among the top priorities of the AU. For example, it was ECOWAS with the support of the AU that intervened in the crisis in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. The AU was the first to deploy peacekeepers in Darfur (AMIS), Burundi and lately Somalia. The AU Peace and Security Council has been established as part of AU's endeavour to develop a more robust and dependable security architecture on the continent, including the setting up of an African Standby Force in the near future. Thanks to such past and ongoing efforts by Africans themselves, with the support of the international community, the high number of armed conflicts, including civil and interstate conflicts witnessed since the cold war years and the post-cold war era in the 1990s on the African continent have been considerably reduced.

Although the urgent resolution of the prevailing crises in Cote d'Ivoire and Somalia as well as the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict are imperative, equal attention needs to be paid to the consolidation of peace in countries that are emerging from conflicts such as Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the DRC by addressing the root causes of these conflicts, including good governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights. It is a charge the comity of nations have to keep if we are to avoid the repetition of past tragic experiences of relapses of conflict.

To this end, we welcome the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission whose first annual report highlights the challenges associated with post-conflict reconstruction and development of countries such as Sierra Leone and Burundi who are on the agenda of the Commission. As a member and having been recently elected Vice-Chair of this Commission, Ghana will use her endeavours to work with other members to ensure the success of the PBC's agenda.

We welcome the Security Council resolution authorizing the deployment of a hybrid operation in Darfur with the consent of the government of the Sudan, and call for its speedy implementation within the agreed time frame. Commendable though the AU's ongoing peace initiatives may be, it cannot be overemphasized that the enormity of the challenges in Somalia go well beyond the capacity of the AU and requires the concerted support of the UN.

We, therefore, urge the United Nations, within the letter and spirit of the UN Security Council resolution 1772, adopted in August, 2007, to

consider seriously, the AU's request for financial, logistical and technical support towards the full and effective deployment of the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and to enable AU member-states such as Ghana, which have pledged to contribute troops, to do so, while at the same time expediting the development of a contingency plan for the possible deployment of a UN force to replace AMISOM whose six-month mandate expires by next February.

Against the backdrop of the remaining conflicts, Africa, contrary to some misconceptions in certain quarters, is not a lost case or cause. There is so much good news from Africa. Many foreign investors are believed to be making comparatively more profits from their operations on our continent. As a result of the improvement in the macro-management of many African economies, the positive average GDP growth of African countries increased from 5.2% in 2005 to 5.7% in 2006, and it is projected the current 6% GDP average growth rates will be sustained, if not exceeded in the coming years. Africa is therefore ready for good business.

Ghana's economy, for instance, is benefitting from increased growth underpinned by anti-inflationary monetary policy and fiscal consolidation. The business environment has improved and was recently rated by the World Bank as among the top ten reformers in facilitating business. This has increased investor confidence in the economy and the prospects of attaining our long-term goal of becoming a middle-income country are gradually but steadily becoming brighter.

But, we should not be complacent about our achievements in the economic field as there are still huge developmental challenges to overcome. We are confronted with increasing social and economic inequalities halfway to the year 2015 set for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The income gap between developed and developing countries is widening and many African countries may miss the targets set if the international economic and trading environment characterized in part by unfavourable terms of trade against exports from developing countries persists and the rich industrialized countries fail to honour their commitments, including substantial increases of ODA to developing countries, particularly Africa which is home to a majority of least developed countries.

We call on the developed countries to take into account the demands and interest of developing countries during the DOHA round, including by enhancing market access through the removal of subsidies that harm

agricultural exports as well as the dismantling of tariff escalation regimes that often undermine the export of added-value products from developing countries. Similarly, we believe that one real measure of the success and value of the Economic Partnership Agreement being negotiated between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries will be defined by the extent to which it will facilitate the export of processed products from developing countries.

Over the last few years, the AU has been seeking to forge stronger partnerships with Africa's development partners on the basis of Africa's own home-grown development blue print, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which places more emphasis on priority regional and national projects in various fields, including the development of infrastructure, such as energy, roads and railways, and water resources; agriculture and rural development; information and communication technology; education and human resources, peace and security, trade and industrialization, science and technology.

There have been commendable levels of support demonstrated by many of Africa's development partners in almost all these priority areas, including support for e-schools and school feeding programmes to promote universal free and compulsory basic education. We also welcome the decision of the General Assembly to endorse the NEPAD as the framework for cooperation with the AU and recognize the efforts to improve the coordination and coherence within the UN system to this end. However, we do also recognize that more needs to be done on the part of both the AU and the UN to ensure greater cooperation towards the full realization of the objectives of NEPAD.

As more African countries subscribe voluntarily to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), it is becoming increasingly evident that the real value of the APRM lies in the fact that it is a very creative and ingenious tool to address the potential root causes of conflict, including the eradication of poverty through sound public administration and prudent economic management by means of open, inclusive democratic governance.

We welcome the various UN and AU initiatives and renewed efforts aimed at forging greater cooperation and coordination between the UN and the AU in addressing conflicts and other development challenges, in particular the conclusion of a memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation between the AU and AU signed in November, 2006 in Addis

Ababa aimed at implementing a ten-year capacity-building programme for the AU.

Mr. President,

Increasingly, the consequences of climate change are becoming difficult, if not impossible, to ignore as its effects are being manifested in daily lives across the world, particularly in the developing countries. In Africa, the negative effects of climate change makes it difficult to guarantee the necessities of life. Erratic rainfall patterns, drought and desertification, flood and other weather-related disasters continue to affect agricultural productivity, food and water supplies. It is obvious that these conditions exacerbate famine, retard efforts to reduce poverty and undermine progress in development as a whole.

The recent report by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicated that poor countries will be the hardest hit by climate change effect in spite of the fact that they contribute the least to the phenomenon.

We therefore, urge the international community to accelerate its cooperation to support efforts by the developing countries to adapt to the impact of climate change. Such support should include finance and a broader technology transfer approach focusing on human resources, training and management.

It must be considered an obligation for the developed countries to honour their commitments to help deal with climate and coastal hazards in the world's vulnerable regions like sub-Saharan Africa, the LDCs and the Small Island Developing States. Donors and multilateral development organizations should mainstream and support adaptation across their assistance to developing countries.

We may not be able to predict the consequences of climate change with certainty but we believe we now know enough to understand the risks associated with the phenomenon and the price of inaction.

Mr. President,

Despite the collective efforts of the community of nations towards disarmament and non-proliferation, the world is as unsafe as it was decades ago. In the face of grave threats to humankind, it is ironic that little

progress has been made to reverse the prevailing abysmal developments within the disarmament realm. This has raised, and rightly so, some concerns over whether disarmament is in danger of becoming a forsaken and forgotten goal of the Organization.

While it has been widely acknowledged that we now live in a new and complex security environment, the international community is yet to adopt the required realistic and achievable solutions to contain the grave threats as countries continue to uphold paradoxical and anachronistic security policies, inconsistent with present realities.

In an era of collective security, it is imperative that we replace unilateralism with multilateralism, which has been widely acclaimed as the only viable option for the pursuit of constructive disarmament and non-proliferation.

As the bastion of international peace and security, the UN is naturally expected to assume its leadership role to this end. It is in this connection that we reaffirm our support for the Secretary-General's proposal to establish an Office for Disarmament Affairs to be part of the decision-making process in the Secretariat. We hope that with his sterling diplomatic pedigree and commitment to world peace and security, the active involvement of Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon would yield the desired fruit and propel the disarmament realm into the path of progress.

Naturally, without the goodwill and cooperation of member-states, the Secretary-General's noble ideals cannot gain the day. We, therefore, strongly urge member-states to extend an unfettered support to the Secretary-General to facilitate the realization of the envisaged goal. This, in our view, would further demonstrate our persistently expressed strong support for multilateralism.

In this connection, let me stress that the collective aspiration of humankind to live in a peaceful and secured world would remain a mirage, unless we buttress our conviction in multilateralism by exhibiting genuine commitment and the political will to objectively and faithfully abide by the outcome of such negotiations.

Ghana would continue to strongly advocate for the right of states, especially developing countries, to peaceful use of nuclear technology, given its immense contribution to socio-economic development. However, we also

recognize that this inherent right should be pursued under the rubric of international agreements, especially with respect to verifiability and transparency. My delegation therefore joins others in calling for the IAEA's verification mechanism to be strengthened to enable the Agency discharge its onerous responsibility effectively and efficiently.

Mr. President,

As Africa makes significant progress towards healing the wounds of long wars that plagued regions of the continent, an issue of grave concern is the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons, a misnomer for lethal instruments whose abuse has wrought havoc and caused untold distress to millions of people and fuelled insecurity and instability across the globe.

While laudable progress has been made since the adoption of the UN Programme of Action in 2001, we are yet to attain the envisaged goal and thereby stifle the obnoxious malpractice of callous persons who have turned wanton deaths into a lucrative business. We owe it to the numerous victims who look up to this Organization to lead in efforts towards stemming the proliferation of these Weapons of Mass Destruction, thereby, saving generations from experiencing the tragic ordeal which others have suffered and continue to suffer.

We recognize that peacekeeping has undergone tremendous change on account of the complexities of these conflicts. At the last session, the Organization took important steps to improving capacity to effectively conduct peace operations. Ghana as one of the oldest and consistent contributors to United Nations peacekeeping will continue to support the United Nations as it seeks new ways to enhance its peace operations. To this end, Ghana welcomes the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, given the current surge in peacekeeping operations. The establishment of a Department of Field Service is a laudable one. The realignment of peacekeeping operations will not only augment the work of the overburdened Department of Peacekeeping Operations, it will also help promote accountability and transparency.

My delegation also welcomes the significant step forward taken by the General Assembly in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of this Organization by approving the first serious overhaul of the United Nations' administration of justice in 60 years. It is imperative that staff of the UN

Secretariat and Funds have a justice system which is independent, transparent, professional and adequately resourced to tackle emerging problems with prompt solutions.

Mr. President,

Conflicts, particularly in the developing world, have robbed us of the opportunity to improve the circumstances of our people. Sustainable development can only be achieved in an international environment characterized by peace and security.

Ghana wishes therefore to reiterate her commitment to the ideals of the United Nations and will continue to live up to its charter obligations including playing an active role in international peacekeeping to assist the United Nations in its task of maintaining global peace and security. Ghana believes that the United Nations remains the ideal multilateral instrument available for maintaining international peace and security and for promoting fruitful international cooperation. We must, therefore, all strengthen our resolve and muster the necessary political will to allow the UN to function more effectively in redeeming the majority of our people from wars, disease and poverty by providing appropriate financial and material resources commensurate with its responsibilities.

I thank you