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ADDRESS

By

H.E. MR. ARMANDO EMÍLIO GUEBUZA
President of the Republic of Mozambique

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the People, the Government of the Republic of Mozambique and indeed on my own behalf I would like to associate myself with the previous speakers to congratulate you, most warmly, for your election as the President of the 62nd session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that with your experience and wise leadership, as demonstrated throughout your remarkable academic and diplomatic career at the service of your country, and with the support of all of us, the deliberations of this session will be crowned with success.

My delegation would like to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, for her dedication and innovative manner in which she presided over the deliberations of the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We wish to reiterate our special tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, for his election to this post, and salute him for his commitment to the continued search for solutions to the many challenges faced by humanity, and for his hard work in favour of our organization. Mr. Secretary-General, we would like to reaffirm our full readiness to continue cooperating with you for the successful discharge of your difficult but noble mission.

Mr. President,

We commend the selection of the theme on climate change as the main discussion topic for this session, as it is an urgent and important issue for our countries and for the future of our planet. Thanks to the revolution in convergence technology in the areas of informatics, broadcasting and telecommunication, with implications in time and space compression, we follow, with emotion and regularly, and in some instances in real time, the effects of climate change in our planet. We witnessed for example:

- ❖ the reduction of availability of hydrological resources and the drama it causes to human beings, fauna and flora;**
- ❖ the increase of the frequency and magnitude of extreme meteorological phenomena, such as extreme temperatures, earthquakes and tsunamis, resulting in the occurrence of natural disasters whose consequences are incalculable;**
- ❖ the reduction of glaciers and the rise of sea-level, only to mention but a few of some of the potential impacts of climate change, whose effects are yet to be clearly determined.**

The impact of these phenomena is felt more harshly in developing countries, like ours, given our deficient forecast capacity, in terms of human and technical resources. When these disasters hit our countries, our limitations and lack of capacity to face them become more obvious:

- ❖ lack of infrastructures, such as roads and bridges, preventing rescue personnel to timely assist, even citizens at great risk;
- ❖ lack of means to assist the victims;
- ❖ lack of resources to mitigate the suffering of the survivals.

However, we live in a global village and the effects of climate change are also felt in developed countries. Phenomena that have never been recorded, with the magnitude and frequency with which they manifest themselves today, are beginning to be a cause of concern for the citizens of these countries.

To digress a little from the discussion at hand, we would like to express our solidarity and compassion to all victims of natural disasters that have been affecting different regions of the globe, in recent years. In honour of the victims of these disasters let us all of us reaffirm our commitment to continue together striving for a better world, a world free from these threats to the human lives and their belongings, and to fauna and flora.

It is a collective commitment and desire that we have already taken upon ourselves through several instruments, such as the Rio Declaration, the Agenda 21 and the Kyoto Protocol. More than ever, and in the face of recurrent and more and more devastating tragedies, there is need for involvement of all members the international community in the implementation of global actions enshrined in these commitments.

By the same token, we should ensure that the three pillars of sustainable development, namely economic development, social

development and protection of the environment should be approached and tackled by all of us, in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner. Let us all keep in mind the strong relationship between these commitments and our collective desire to realize the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President

We note, with satisfaction, that the international community continues committed to addressing, in structured and sustainable manner, the challenges imposed by climate change. In this context, we commend the decisions taken by the G8 Heads of State and Government on climate change at their last Summit held in June this year in Germany.

We would also like to congratulate the Secretary General of the United Nations, particularly for the appointment of three eminent persons as Special Envoys on Climate Change. The convening of the High-level vent on climate change, just two days ago at this august General Assembly hall, opens up new prospects for the renewed momentum required so that substantial progress can be made during the Conference of the State Parties to the United Nations Framework Agreement on Climate Change to be held in December this year in Bali, Indonesia.

We are hopeful that this Conference will build consensus on future actions, including concrete targets aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions, as well as a post-Kyoto agreement to

bind all nations. May this Conference not frustrate the expectations that are being built around it, particularly from developing countries. Therefore, we are hopeful that in Bali consensus will be reached on the following:

1. Funding of the national action plans for adaptation to Climate Change, proposed by developing countries parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change;
2. Adaptation fund, established in conformity with the Kyoto Protocol, to provide assistance to developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries, in the funding of their adaptation activities;
3. Implementation of the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and response measures.

Mr. President,

Mozambique is a country prone to different types of natural disasters, which cyclically, have resulted in the loss of human lives, destruction of huge farm areas, property, social and economic infrastructures as well as increased soil erosion and poor or outright loss of biodiversity.

This state of affairs is aggravated by the shortage of physical infrastructures for water management, such as dams and dykes, and for food conservation such as silos. In addition, over 70% of our population live in rural areas, and natural resources are their source of livelihood, hence the need for sustainable use that does not jeopardize the country's environmental balance.

Given this permanent vulnerability, environmental issues, in general, and climate change, in particular, form an integral part of the Government agenda. Particular attention is, thus given to:

- (i) reducing the vulnerability of the citizens to famine caused by drought;**
- (ii) reducing human and property losses;**
- (iii) mitigating the suffering of citizens, as the result of disasters; and**
- (iv) ensuring quick and harmonious reconstruction process.**

The activities underway include, mapping the areas at risk, improving the early warning system, improving the conditions for the population to store agricultural produce, training and provision of civic education to our citizens on natural disasters and their impact on the country and establishment of the National Operative Emergency Centre which operates 24 hours a day non-stop.

The introduction and operationalization of these measures give priority and count with the active participation of our citizens. For us, the involvement of the citizens, the first and ultimate beneficiaries of these government actions, is a key factor to ensuring the success of the activities aimed at the preservation of the environment and the mitigation of the adverse effects of climate change.

The positive impact of these actions was noticeable and widely acknowledged during the recent floods, cyclones and high tides

we experienced early this year. These measures were, once again, put recently at test when a warning on a possibility of occurrence of tsunami was launched.

Mr. President,

In recognition that the mitigation and the adaptation to climate change, the prevention and reduction of natural disasters require the engagement of the international community, the importance of strengthening regional, continental and international coordination cannot be overemphasized. In the framework of the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, we advocate the strengthening of the Financial Arrangement for Global Environment within the United Nations System. We thus encourage the United Nations to enhance its institutional capacity and resources to better assist Member States to incorporate adequate environmental policies in their national development strategies. In this regard, special attention should be given to developing countries with limited resources to fund their national capacity-building to deal with climate change related issues.

From this podium we, once again, call upon all United Nations Member States to accede to and fully implement all the instruments that have been adopted to revert and mitigate the impact of climate change. These instruments include the Kyoto Protocol, the Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration whose contents

were reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002.

Mr. President,

As members of the United Nations family, we have the historic responsibility to secure a bright future for our children and for the generations to come by preserving an environment with quality. Today, more than ever, the time has come for us to join our hands and work towards the preservation of our planet. To act against climate change is, in the long run, to preserve world peace and security and to ensure necessary conditions to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which should be viewed and assumed as the minimum that can be demanded for now. Indeed, let us not postpone till tomorrow what we can, and should do today, as tomorrow may be too late.

I thank you very much for your kind attention!