



STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT

OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,

COMRADE R. G. MUGABE,

ON

THE OCCASION OF THE 62ND SESSION

OF

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

NEW YORK, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2007.

Your Excellency, President of the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
Mr. Srgjan Kerim,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election to preside over this august assembly. We are confident that through your stewardship, issues on this 62nd Session agenda will be dealt with in a balanced manner and to the satisfaction of all.

Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor, Madame Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, who steered the work of the 61st Session in a very competent and impartial manner.

Her ability to identify the crucial issues facing the world today will be remembered as the hallmark of her presidency.

Mr. President,

We extend our hearty welcome to the new Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, who has taken up this challenging job requiring dynamism in confronting the global challenges of the 21st Century. Balancing global interests and steering the United Nations in a direction that gives hope to the multitudes of the poor, the sick, the hungry and the marginalized, is indeed a mammoth task. We would like to assure him that Zimbabwe will continue to support an open, transparent and all-inclusive multilateral approach in dealing with these global challenges.

Mr. President,

Climate change is one of the most pressing global issues of our time. Its negative impact is greatest in developing countries, particularly those on the African continent. We believe that if the international community is going to seriously address the challenges of climate change, then we need to get our priorities right. In Zimbabwe, the effects of climate change have become more evident in the past decade as we have witnessed increased and recurrent droughts as well as occasional floods, leading to enormous humanitarian challenges.

Mr. President,

We are for a United Nations that recognizes the equality of sovereign nations and peoples whether big or small. We are averse to a body in which the economically and militarily powerful behave like bullies, trampling on the rights of weak and smaller states as sadly happened in Iraq. In the light of these inauspicious developments, this Organisation must surely examine the essence of its authority and the extent of its power when challenged in this manner.

Such challenges to the authority of the UN and its Charter underpin our repeated call for the revitalization of the United Nations General Assembly, itself the most representative organ of the UN. The General Assembly should be more active in all areas including those of peace and security. The encroachment of some U.N. organs upon the work of the General Assembly is of great concern to us. Thus any process of revitalizing or strengthening of the General Assembly should necessarily avoid eroding the principle of the accountability of all principal and subsidiary organs to the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

Once again we reiterate our position that the Security Council as presently constituted is not democratic. In its present configuration, the Council has shown that it is not in a position to protect the weaker states who find themselves at loggerheads with a marauding super-power. Most importantly, justice demands that any Security Council reform redresses the fact that Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat and veto power in the Security Council. Africa's demands are known and enunciated in the Ezulwini consensus.

Mr. President,

We further call for the U.N. system to refrain from interfering in matters that are clearly the domain of member states and are not a threat to international peace and security. Development at country level should continue to be country-led, and not subject to the whims of powerful donor states.

Mr President,

Zimbabwe won its independence on 18th April, 1980 after a protracted war against British colonial imperialism which denied us human rights and democracy. That colonial system which suppressed and oppressed us enjoyed the support of many countries of the West who were signatories to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Even after 1945, it would appear that the Berlin Conference of 1884, through which Africa was parceled to colonial European powers, remained stronger than the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is therefore clear that for the West, vested economic interests, racial and ethnocentric considerations proved stronger than their adherence to principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The West still negates our sovereignties by way of control of our resources, in the process making us mere chattels in our own lands, mere minders of its trans-national interests. In my own country and other sister states in Southern Africa, the most visible form of this control has been over land despoiled from us at the onset of British colonialism. That control largely persists, although it stands firmly challenged in Zimbabwe, thereby triggering the current stand-off between us and Britain, supported by her cousin states, most notably the United States and Australia. Mr. Bush, Mr. Blair and now Mr. Brown's sense of human rights precludes our people's right to their God-given resources, which in their view must be controlled by their kith and kin. I am termed dictator because I have rejected this supremacist view and frustrated the neo-colonialists.

Mr President,

Clearly the history of the struggle for our own national and people's rights is unknown to the president of the United States of America. He thinks the Declaration of Human Rights starts with his last term in office! He thinks he can introduce to us, who bore the brunt of fighting for the freedoms of our peoples, the virtues of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. What rank hypocrisy!

Mr President,

I lost eleven precious years of my life in the jail of a white man whose freedom and well-being I have assured from the first day of Zimbabwe's Independence. I lost a further fifteen years fighting white injustice in my country.

Ian Smith is responsible for the death of well over 50 000 of my people. I bear scars of his tyranny which Britain and America condoned. I meet his victims everyday. Yet he walks free. He farms free. He talks freely, associates freely under a black Government. We taught him democracy. We gave him back his humanity. He would have faced a different fate here and in Europe if the 50 000 he killed were Europeans. Africa has not called for a Nuremberg trial against the white world which committed heinous crimes against its own humanity. It has not hunted perpetrators of this genocide, many of whom live to this day, nor has it got reparations from those who offended against it. Instead it is Africa which is in the dock, facing trial from the same world that persecuted it for centuries.

Let Mr. Bush read history correctly. Let him realise that both personally and in his representative capacity as the current President of the United States, he stands for this "civilisation" which occupied, which colonised, which incarcerated, which killed. He has much to atone for and very little to lecture us on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. His hands drip with innocent blood of many nationalities.

He still kills.

He kills in Iraq. He kills in Afghanistan. And this is supposed to be our master on human rights?

He imprisons.

He imprisons and tortures at Guantanamo. He imprisoned and tortured at Abu Ghraib. He has secret torture chambers in Europe. Yes, he imprisons even here in the United States, with his jails carrying more blacks than his universities can ever enroll. He even suspends the provisions of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Take Guantanamo for example; at that concentration camp international law does not apply. The national laws of the people there do not apply. Laws of the United States of America do not apply. Only Bush's law applies. Can the international community accept being lectured by this man on the provisions of the universal declaration of human rights? Definitely not!

Mr President,

We are alarmed that under his leadership, basic rights of his own people and those of the rest of the world have summarily been rolled back. America is primarily responsible for rewriting core tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We seem all guilty for 9/11. Mr. Bush thinks he stands above all structures of governance, whether national or international. At home, he apparently does not need the Congress. Abroad, he does not need the UN, international law and opinion. This forum did not sanction Blair and Bush's misadventures in Iraq. The two rode roughshod over the UN and international opinion. Almighty Bush is now coming back to the UN for a rescue package because his nose is bloodied! Yet he dares lecture us on tyranny. Indeed, he wants us to pray him! We say No to him and encourage him to get out of Iraq. Indeed he should mend his ways before he clambers up the pulpit to deliver pieties of democracy.

Mr President,

The British and the Americans have gone on a relentless campaign of destabilising and vilifying my country. They have sponsored surrogate forces to challenge lawful authority in my country. They seek regime change, placing themselves in the role of the Zimbabwean people in whose collective will democracy places the right to define and change regimes. Let these sinister governments be told here and now that Zimbabwe will not allow a regime change authored by outsiders. We do not interfere with their own systems in America and Britain. Mr Bush and Mr Brown have no role to play in our national affairs. They are outsiders and mischievous outsiders and should therefore keep out! The colonial sun set a long time ago; in 1980 in the case of Zimbabwe, and hence Zimbabwe will never be a colony again. Never!

We do not deserve sanctions. We are Zimbabweans and we know how to deal with our problems. We have done so in the past, well before Bush and Brown were known politically. We have our own regional and continental organizations and communities. In that vein, I wish to express my country's gratitude to President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa who, on behalf of SADC, successfully facilitated the dialogue between the Ruling Party and the Opposition Parties, which yielded the agreement that has now resulted in the constitutional provisions being finally adopted. Consequently, we will be holding multiple democratic elections in March 2008. Indeed we have always had timeous general and presidential elections since our independence.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me stress once more that the strength of the United Nations lies in its universality and impartiality as it implements its mandate to promote peace and security, economic and social development, human rights and international law as outlined in the Charter. Zimbabwe stands ready to play its part in all efforts and programmes aimed at achieving these noble goals.

I thank you.

RGM/lmn