



Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Civil society colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for this time and space for a civil society voice—a voice integral to the life and work of this august body as it is to the entire United Nations system.

There should be no equivocation on this necessary partnership of governments and non-governments, with civil society as a whole, for the common enterprise of fashioning and building a world that is animated by human rights, secured by peace, founded in friendship and tolerance, and sustained by just and participatory development.

I salute you for the work you have set out to do. Your agenda is ambitious but necessary. It is a long enumeration of issues and themes—from making the aid architecture effective and relevant to achieving the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs as well as the very notion, and hopefully, realization of sustainable development itself, which is MDG 7.

As you wade and plow through your agenda, know of our assurances of the support and cooperation of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations. On your shoulders are the hopes and aspirations of peoples around the world who are looking for ways and means to get out of extreme hunger and poverty.

Surely, the food crisis, the energy crisis, the ecological crisis and the many ongoing conflicts that remain to vex the relations of nations make even more urgent your agenda. After all, you are the economic and social council of the United Nations.

Under your leadership, the peoples of the world, in their widest expanse as civil societies look upon you for the continued affirmation of the necessary and crucial nexus of human rights and sustainable development.

CONGO, the Conference of NGOs, met here in New York in the last three days of 27 to 29 June, in the third year of a series of its Civil Society Development Forum, back to back with this High Level Segment of ECOSOC, to grapple with the very agenda that you have set out to deal with.

CSDF produced an Outcome Document which CONGO submitted to you as our contribution to the discourse on aid effectiveness and the furthering of sustainable

development. It contains twenty points that reflect the many concerns that civil society organizations want to convey to you for your consideration.

Last year, in your session in Geneva, you have reflected in your final Ministerial Declaration, a reference to the contribution of the CSDF in last year's ECOSOC agenda. This year we are offering a paragraph for your consideration. This paragraph distills the many and varied concerns that we, your civil society partners, request your highest considerations.

In part, this paragraph asserts that *"the achievement of sustainable development goes hand in hand with the realization of human rights; that the two are mutually reinforcing."* We are also reaffirming that *"the human right to food and urge for recognition of food sovereignty, in particular to help mitigate the effects of a deepening global food availability crisis."* In the same paragraph, we call on *"the donor community and recipient countries to realize the nexus between gender equality, human rights and environmental stability to increase the effectiveness of development strategies."*

The crises that stare us in the face, and to which our moral and ethical compasses must point, are grave, daunting, and urgent. Our Outcome Document points to these crises—the "food crisis being a manifestation of failed sustainable development policies, leading to riots in many countries; energy prices driving the cost of food, other commodities and services even higher; climate change having adverse effects worldwide; increasingly destructive weather patterns and occurrences; more extensive desertification, increased drying up of critical water resources, rising sea levels threatening the survival of populations on low-lying coastlines and islands; global financial turmoil and uncertainty; and the many ongoing conflicts around the world."

To these crises, we hope and urge the governments of the world, especially those gathered in this hallowed ECOSOC Chambers, *"to support efforts in the preparation of the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to devote more attention to gender equality, human rights and environmental sustainability. We call for a more balanced economic policy agenda that promotes participatory and gender responsive budgets as tools for including the voices of the poor and of women in fiscal policy."*

*"Specifically, we urge Governments, and public and private entities, to support gender mainstreaming and promote gender balance in the agricultural sector,"* noting always that at the very least our efforts at attaining the MDGS point to many women who do not own and have no legal titles to lands, and to those in extreme hunger and poverty who are marginalized and vulnerable in their lack of share in the civil and political process as well as in the economic, social and cultural spheres.

If there is one message that we would like you to consider, it is this: that at this 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we will recommit ourselves to the universality, inalienability and interdependence of all human rights—civil, political, economic, social and cultural. And that we look to the day when there is far more consensus than doubt in the mutual obligations implied by the human right to

development which is part of our understanding, but not always of our practice, of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Many crises may indeed be before us. But these crises must open new possibilities for response even as we continue to strengthen those that you have already agreed to do. Indeed, new occasions must teach us new duties. Our imagination is limitless in devising the ways how else we can better the world for the succeeding generations to no longer see war, but live peace; to no longer hunger but live sustainably; to no longer see fear, but live securely.

I say imagination because the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were products of imagination. But imagination that came from a memory of the horrors of two world wars, of genocide and the Holocaust, and of the ravages of colonialism. The visionaries that set out to build and form the United Nations saw to it that in its Charter shall be the participation of non-governmental actors so that they too become partners in the shaping of a new and better world—a better world under just, participatory and sustainable governance, not just good governance.

In place of a memory of the horrors of war, whose destructive capacity numbs if not destroys human creativity and human infrastructures, we have the affirmation in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of human dignity being foundational to human rights. We have human rights being foundational to the achievement of peace. We have peace being foundational to the attainment of sustainability. We have sustainable development being foundational to the achievement of security—of all sorts, i.e. national security, people's security, food security, human security. Indeed, international ethics demand of us that both our discourse and praxis of security must point to nothing else but the security of peoples, not just of one sovereign country's citizens but the very essence that is at the core of the *raison d'être* of the United Nations—"We the peoples" of the whole world.

At the crucible of memory and imagination is the challenge to think beyond and outside the box, if you will. The witness, testimony and personal narratives of two of my other colleagues will tell you why the tapestry that makes up civil society is rich and therefore must not be ignored but tapped for sustainable development. Prof. Said Irandoust of the Asian Institute of Technology, will tell you of a recent meeting under the auspices of AIT, that brought together governments and civil society leaders, including CONGO members, from the ASEAN region. Beatrice Ekua Ansa Eshon of Ghana, from the network called NETRIGHT, and her own organization called ATTWAR, will come the plea and summons to action from African civil society.

Mr President, Excellencies, friends,

We are at the interregnum of *chronos* and *kairos* —between the calendar days of our work and the right and opportune moment beyond our daily cares and dares—when

words and agreements in text which we produce quite well will neither feed the hungry, neither mitigate climate change, neither lower the cost of energy, nor clothe, nor school, nor shelter and make healthy the extreme poor, the marginalized, the vulnerable, the children, the youth, the women.

Ours indeed is both the *chronos* and the *kairos* moments when our words must be matched with action so that no longer must we frustrate the longing of humankind, of our peoples, and of civil society and citizenries at large, for politics that empowers, for civics that fosters global community, for economics that sustains, and for culture that ennoble even more the values of not just tolerance but deep friendship; not just human rights but human dignity; not just security but peoples' security; not just development but sustainable development.

Your work, and our work, can and must be intertwined.

Mr President, excellencies,

Be assured of my best wishes for the conduct of your work.

LIBERATO C. BAUTISTA  
President