24 October 2013

Message of H.E. Ambassador John W. Ashe
President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
on UN Day

Since its founding in 1945, the United Nations has always been looked upon by the international community as a
global organisation that might one day lead to a more just world, grounded in the values of peace, human rights
and prosperity for all. Sixty-eight years have now passed and we can safely say the United Nations is needed
more than ever. As the world grapples with deadly conflicts and other incidents of violence, environmental
degradation, inequality and persistent challenges in meeting development goals, our United Nations provides a
unique forum for its Member States to deliberate on matters that most concern the world’s people and to work
towards common solutions.

Our concerted efforts have led to great successes, in which we can all take pride. Since 1990, the proportion of
people living in extreme poverty has declined by half; over 2 billion people have access to improved sources of
drinking water; child mortality for children under 5 has dropped by more than 40%; and impressive gains have
been made in the fight against HIV and AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. We should also acknowledge the UN’s
role in international peace and security; since 1945, the UN has assisted in negotiating more than 170 peace
settlements that have ended regional conflicts and its peacekeeping operations are now deployed on four
continents. We can also take pride in the recent adoption of a historic treaty regulating the trade of arms.

Yet, with one billion people still living on less than $1.25 a day, and a number of persistent or emerging
development challenges, much more needs to be done. Many in the international community are keeping track
of the days left to the deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We now have less than
800 days to go before the 2015 deadline for the realization of the these goals, and we need to fulfil our promises
and demonstrate that we can turn our words into concrete actions that make a real difference in people’s lives.
Furthermore, as we begin setting the stage for our next universal undertaking the post-2015 Development
Agenda - we must pick up where the MDGs left off and overhaul our approach to both people and planet to
create a universal and shared development agenda, which leaves no one behind.

On this dual track of both accelerating progress towards the MDGs and defining our new development agenda,
let us take a moment to recall the ideals and values the founding members enshrined in our Charter. Let the
inspiration that led to the founding of this family of nations guide us and inspire us in this new chapter of our
shared history.