

26 September 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Ministerial meeting of the United Nations Alliance of  
Civilisations (UNAOC) Group of friends**

**Excellencies,  
The United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations,  
Distinguished participants  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

At the outset, I thank the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations for inviting me to address the Alliance's Group of Friends this morning. The theme for our engagement, "New and Emerging Ideological Threats to Global Peace & Co-Existence", is certainly of critical importance to all of us gathered here today.

The number of violent conflicts worldwide, as well as increasing threats posed by terrorist activities, extremism and intolerance represent a grave threat and challenge to our way of life. From the Middle East, to Africa, to the Far East, humanity's tranquillity is under serious challenge.

This Alliance was established, inter alia, to: promote a more peaceful and socially inclusive world; to promote respect and understanding among peoples of different cultures and religions, with a view to rejecting extremism and embracing diversity; to promote tolerance, dialogue and peaceful co-existence among humanity.

I pay tribute to the Friends of the Alliance, and the High Representative, for championing the Alliance's cause, day-by-day. With 140 Members, and six Global Fora held so far in Madrid, Istanbul, Rio, Doha, Vienna and Bali, key messages of combating intolerance and discrimination, based on religious beliefs, race and ethnicity continue to sound loud.

Regrettably, in the face of humanity's determination to rid itself of these vices, there appears to be a parallel determination by a minority among us to harm and kill others. This remains our defining challenge going forward. As a global community, we must remain united to combat violence and extremism in all its forms and manifestations.

In an increasingly inter-connected world, we can no longer afford to view violent extremism in simply domestic or regional lenses.

It is in this context, that I chose peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as enhancing the role of the alliance of civilisations, among the priorities for the session of the General Assembly.

It is of critical importance that we approach the threat of violence and extremism in a holistic manner, digging deep among, and within ourselves and our societies, to gain a better understanding of the root causes of violence and conflict. We must gain a better understanding of the ideological underpinnings of violence; whether cultural, religious, ethnic or otherwise. As Friends of the Alliance, as well as the larger international community, we need to think of creative ways to deny space and platforms that are used to propagate hate.

As we all know, today's youth are particularly vulnerable, and as leaders, we must strive to provide educational, vocational and professional alternatives for our young people. We are also challenged to create meaningful job opportunities for them.

As an international community, we must reiterate that the killing of innocent civilians, under any pretext, is unacceptable. We must redouble our efforts to bring safety and security to all of the world's peoples.

I thank you for your kind attention.