

16 January 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Interactive Dialogue with Civil Society**

**Distinguished Delegates,
Civil Society Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to welcome you all to this briefing, which will provide us with an opportunity to discuss your participation in a number of important upcoming initiatives, in line with General Assembly resolution 68/307.

As you well know, we have just marked the beginning of a historic year, as the world turns its attention to the formulation of an inclusive and transformative post-2015 development agenda.

To achieve the future we want, the international community will need to harness resources, skills, knowledge and creative energies from all corners of society. In this ambitious endeavour, civil society has played and will continue to play a critical role.

Over the past two years, the collaborative environment fostered around the creation of the post-2015 development agenda has been unprecedented. Over seven million people have taken the MyWorld Survey to voice their priorities. Representatives from civil society, academia, parliaments, local authorities and the private sector have participated in numerous consultations to share their views, aspirations and concerns.

Today, we will discuss how you and other relevant stakeholders can further your contributions to the process leading to the adoption of the new agenda, as well as actively engage in several upcoming high-level events.

Together, we must go beyond business as usual. We must create a partnership of development cooperation that promotes global governance and national accountability through existing country-level mechanisms, as well as regional and international frameworks for action.

Esteemed Colleagues,

Next week, we will launch the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda with a stocktaking session from 19 to 21 January.

Building upon the practices of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the co-facilitators will ensure the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including; major groups, civil society, scientific and knowledge institutions, parliaments, local authorities and the private sector. In this regard, the first session will feature an interactive dialogue with such contributors.

The General Assembly has also encouraged non-governmental organizations and business sector entities to participate in the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and its preparatory process. To that effect, informal interactive hearings with representatives of civil society and the business sector will take place on 4-5 March.

Distinguished Guests,

Relevant stakeholders will also be asked to actively take part in six high-level events that I intend to convene over the remainder of the session.

The first will be a thematic debate on the Means of Implementation for the post-2015 development agenda on 9 and 10 February. The debate will provide an opportunity to exchange views on what actions need to be taken to scale up mobilisation of the means of implementation of the new development agenda. In particular, it will focus on the role of parliaments, city and local officials in the implementation of the future development framework.

A thematic debate on Advancing Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in the post-2015 development agenda has been scheduled for 6 March. This event will provide an opportunity to discuss the necessary strategies and measures to tackle the structural underpinnings of gender inequality. It will also explore how to most effectively mobilize the immense untapped potential of women to contribute to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

In April, a thematic debate on Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation will take place. Through this debate, participants will share experiences and address key issues and challenges relating to the promotion of tolerance and reconciliation in the framework of fostering peaceful and inclusive societies and countering extremism.

Another thematic debate on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations is planned for 15 May. This debate will allow participants to share ideas and best practices, highlighting the unique role regional and sub-regional organizations have to play in addressing some of the world's most persistent problems.

In June, I will also convene a high-level event on "The Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment". The event will focus on the investments needed to reap the demographic dividend, including through employment opportunities and decent work for young people.

A final high-level event on Climate Change will be held on 29 June. This event will take place at the mid-point between COP 20 in Lima and COP 21 in Paris and will complement the ongoing UNFCCC

negotiation process. It will provide participants with a platform to exchange views, share experiences and take stock of the progress made ahead of the Paris meeting.

The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service is working closely with my office to manage a self-nomination process of civil society representatives for these events. The aim is to reach out to major groups and relevant regional and international civil society networks, while also seeking to bring new participants and their innovative ideas into the global discourse.

The selection process for the Means of Implementation high-level event has just closed, although the Non-Governmental Liaison Service will launch the selection process for the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment high-level event in the coming week.

Furthermore, my office is coordinating with the Secretary-General's post-2015 team, the United Nations Millennium Campaign, the MYworld team, the UN Foundation, and other stakeholders to promote partner engagement through virtual and social media networks.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Member States, civil society groups, the private sector and other stakeholders have welcomed these outreach initiatives. Such efforts are in-line with United Nations' values and principles; including transparency, inclusiveness, information accessibility and participatory decision-making.

In the past, such processes have brought new voices and ideas to the forefront of discussions on a wide array of global challenges and fostered valuable and constructive inputs. In particular, involvement and contributions from the global South have greatly increased, in part, thanks to these outreach efforts. Going forward, we hope to further strengthen such engagement and partnership across the full spectrum of relevant stakeholders.

I thank you for joining us here today and for your kind attention.