

27 January 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Briefing to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Heads of
International Organisations accredited to Uganda**

Excellencies,

I am pleased to see you all this morning.

The last time I met you here in June last year, following my election as President of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, I shared with you the theme and priorities for the session. I thought I should use this opportunity of my Official visit, to brief you on the work we are doing.

On 31 December 2014, we concluded the main Session of the General Assembly, during which many important accomplishments were made, including:

- Engagement by the General Assembly Membership and the international community on the Ebola crisis, and the historic establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER);
- The endorsement of the Outcome Document of the First World Conference on Indigenous Peoples;
- The Special Session on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014;
- The endorsement of the SAMOA Pathway, following the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States;
- The endorsement of the Vienna Programme of Action, following the 2nd United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, which I attended;
- Adoption of a resolution establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring; and
- Launch of the International Decade for people of African Descent
- Entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on 24 December, 2014, which will be a useful instrument in limiting trade in illicit small arms and light weapons.

As you may be aware, negotiating the post-2015 development agenda will be the main priority for the resumed session of the General Assembly. On 4th December, 2014 the United Nations Secretary-General presented a Synthesis Report to guide Member States in the negotiations. The Report contains proposals from several prior processes, including: The Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals; the Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing; as well as the Report of Experts of Technology Facilitation. These

will all be important inputs for the discussions and negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda in the months ahead. The agenda is scheduled to be adopted at a Special Summit on 25 – 27 September, 2015.

The new Agenda, expected to be transformative and holistic, provides a truly historic opportunity to improve and transform people's lives around the world. The Permanent Representatives of Kenya and Ireland are co-facilitating the negotiating process.

As the theme for the session suggests, we shall need adequate means of implementation. In this regard, I am convening a High-Level Thematic Debate on Means of Implementation for a Transformative post-2015 development agenda on 9 – 10. It will provide an opportunity to exchange views on this important matter, including the role of cities and parliaments in the implementation process.

In July this year, the Third Conference on Financing for Development will take place in Addis Ababa. This will be an important opportunity to reinforce the financing aspects of the new Agenda.

Excellencies,

The second priority we spoke about is climate change. This year is particularly important, as we expect to conclude a legally binding international agreement in December at COP21 in Paris. At COP20, held in Peru in December last year, important decisions were made. The Lima Call for Climate Action provided a preliminary framework to facilitate negotiations, including on issues like mitigation and adaptation, as well as climate financing.

At the mid-point of COP20 that took place in Lima, and COP21 in Paris, I will convene a High-Level event on Climate Change on 29 June, to keep the momentum on climate change. Equally important for our consideration, will be to establish an effective climate financing mechanism.

Given the positive contribution of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organisations, especially with regard to peace and security and development, we agreed to further enhance its role in the General Assembly. United Nations continued engagement with regional organisations during conflict and emergency situations, including the recent Ebola outbreak provides further hope for optimism. I will also be convening a high-level thematic debate in May on this matter, with a view to enhance these partnerships.

The wave of terrorist attacks across the world, including places hitherto considered safe, attests to the need for our continued engagement to find a solution to extremism. Whether it is Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab, ISIS or Boko Haram, the indiscriminate killing of innocent people through terrorism must be stopped. In support of the role of the Alliance of Civilisations, I will be co-hosting a High Level Event on Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation on 4th April. We shall have a discourse on the socio-economic and political issues that breed and nourish terrorism, and chart a way forward. The threat is real, and terrorists are becoming more daring. We have an obligation to find solutions.

Excellencies,

Peace and security continues to be a central matter of UN endeavour. We need to take full advantage of the vast experience accumulated by the United Nations over the years to stop conflicts. Peaceful settlement of disputes is cheaper than war. It is also cheaper than peacekeeping.

On Security Council Reform, the impetus has never been greater. This year, we are celebrating seventy years of the United Nations existence, and the world has changed dramatically since the UN's founding. In this regard, I have outlined the need to move the Inter-government process to a level of a negotiating text. General Assembly engagement is due to resume next month.

Finally on the priorities, the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. I am certain that women will play a central role in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Therefore, as we celebrate 20 years of the landmark Declaration, I will co-host with UN Women, a High Level Debate of 6 March.

Other important issues of international interest to which the General Assembly is keenly involved include:

- Continuous engagement on the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. While the initial effort has been to stop the spread of the virus, phase two must be to build the resilience of these countries to deal with such future epidemics, and their long-term implications. Establishing critical health infrastructure, and training medical personnel remain critical.
- In order to focus our efforts towards youth issues, especially youth unemployment, I will convene a high-level event on "The Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment" in June. The date is yet to be determined. The event will focus on the investments needed, especially to create employment opportunities and decent work for young people.
- The General Assembly, together with the Security Council, have launched the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, with a view to improving the peacebuilding capability of the United Nations system.

This concludes my briefing this morning, I will be glad to respond to any questions you may have.

I thank you for your kind attention.