

5 February 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Hand-Over Ceremony of the Community of Latin American
and Caribbean States**

*Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Denis Antoine, Acting President of the General Assembly, on behalf of
H.E. Sam Kutesa*

**Your Excellency Ana Helena Chacon, Vice President of the Republic of Costa Rica,
Excellencies,
H.E. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you today at this hand-over ceremony of the Chair of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

On behalf of the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Sam Kutesa, who is currently out of New York, I would like to warmly welcome Her Excellency Ana Helena Chacon, Vice President of the Republic of Costa Rica, and commend Costa Rica for its successful Chairmanship of CELAC.

I would also like to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Xavier Lasso-Mendoza and the delegation of Ecuador on assuming the Chairmanship CELAC. The responsibility that has been entrusted to you attests to the confidence that the Group has in your ability and leadership.

Excellencies,

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations like CELAC has remained a cornerstone of the work of the United Nations, as recognized in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Over the years we have seen the important role regional and sub-regional organizations have played in addressing a wide range of regional issues and challenges, including those related to peace and security, human rights and development.

I attach great importance to their contributions and believe excellent opportunities exist for stronger cooperation between such organizations and the United Nations. Given the magnitude and complexity of challenges facing the international community, strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations is important as ever.

Together, we must identify further opportunities for strategic cooperation, with a view toward tangible results that advance the principles of comparative advantages, complementarity and burden-sharing.

Esteemed Colleagues,

Since its creation, CELAC has played a central role in promoting friendly relations, peace and stability, as well as economic growth and cooperation among its Members. I note with appreciation CELAC's commitment to eradicating poverty, inequality and addressing other socio-economic challenges.

Many of the principles and priorities of CELAC, including efforts to promote South-South cooperation and institute environmental protections are issues that are high on the United Nations' agenda.

As you well know, 2015 will be a historic year, as the international community formulates an ambitious and transformative future development agenda. The role of CELAC and its Member States will be of key importance throughout that process.

I stand ready to work closely with CELAC and all regional organizations over the coming months to identify ways to maximize their invaluable contributions to set our world on a course toward sustainable development.

In closing, I would like to thank the outgoing Chair – Costa Rica for its able leadership and wish the incoming Chair – Ecuador a successful tenure.

I thank you for your kind attention.