

25 February 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Opening of the High-level Thematic Debate on “Integrating  
Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Post-2015 Development  
Agenda”**

**Excellencies,  
Mr Deputy Secretary General,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today's event on integrating crime prevention and criminal justice in the post-2015 development agenda is a landmark event for several reasons:

First, our discussions today will serve as an important contribution toward the ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on the future development agenda.

Second, today's event precedes the 13th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which will be held this coming April in Doha, where we will explore the importance of integrating the rule of law and criminal justice with our sustainable development aspirations.

**Esteemed colleagues,**

The importance of crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law were elaborated in the proposal of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Report includes targets related to ending all forms of exploitation, trafficking, violence and torture, promoting the rule of law and ensuring access to justice for all. It also include targets on reducing illicit financial and arms flows, and combating all forms of organized crime.

Crime prevention and access to justice go hand in hand with many critically important development objectives, including the eradication of poverty and increasing access to health services, life-long education, water and energy.

They also contribute to other important initiatives, such as creating adequate opportunities for employment and economic, social and political inclusion, as well as the elimination of inequality and discrimination.



**Excellencies,**

As people everywhere seek to make good on economic and social opportunities for their families and to increase their living standards, we know that protection against crime and violence is one of the most fundamental pre-requisites for leading a dignified, productive life.

In past General Assembly debates, Member States have affirmed that criminal activities, especially transnational organized crime, weaken state authority and fuel corruption.

Crime harms already fragile economies and undermines the quality of life of citizens, particularly women, children and the marginalized.

In our interconnected world, crime continues to transcend borders and to grow in size and scope. Today we talk of crime not just as an issue for individual countries to grapple with, but as a transnational threat to entire regions. Modern, transnational organized crime has great reach and considerable influence due to the billions of dollars that flow from its activities.

The wide-spread, negative impact of crime on citizens, communities and governments has resulted in resounding calls for better crime prevention and greater justice, fairness and equality.

This, in turn, has led to a growing recognition among Member States that there is a need to safeguard our development work by strengthening the rule of law and criminal justice systems.

However, if the rule of law is to become the global guardian of development and defend the hopes and dreams of people around the world, it must be integrated into our larger development aspirations.

The rule of law cannot stand isolated from our overarching global sustainable development efforts. Rather, the rule of law must be a fundamental principle integrated into the core of our work.

To achieve this, we must create effective criminal justice systems that are fit for the purpose of protecting fundamental human rights and promoting justice, equality and fairness.

Such an approach must start at the highest possible levels to ensure that a State's commitment to international law is built into the basic architecture of national criminal justice systems.

In this context, I encourage the adoption and full implementation of all relevant international instruments, including the Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime and against Corruption.

The centerpiece of our efforts should be criminal justice reform, aimed at access to justice and the promotion of an independent judiciary.



**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Time and again we have heard people around the world stress the importance of secure and peaceful communities. Our collective efforts must demonstrate that we have heard their calls for concrete steps to create communities that are free of violence and cruelty.

To do so, justice and equality must be embedded in every civilized society as the foundation for strong institutions and peaceful communities. I hope our discussions here today will positively contribute to those important endeavours.

I thank you for your kind attention.