

23 April 2015

**Preliminary Remarks of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at a Press Conference**

I would like to welcome those who are watching this press briefing online, on television and all who are here in this room. I thank you all.

Post-2015 Development Agenda and Financing for Development

The intergovernmental negotiating process for the Post-2015 development agenda which was launched on 19 January, 2015 is proceeding well. Next month a zero draft for the outcome is expected to be submitted by the Co-Facilitators for consideration. A special Summit is scheduled to adopt the new agenda on 25 – 27 September, 2015. Preparations for the Third Conference on Financing for Development scheduled for July in Addis Ababa are well underway.

Last week, from 17 to 18 April, I participated in the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

While in Washington, I met with several Ministers of Finance and Development Cooperation as well as with the World Bank President, Mr. Jim Yong Kim. In all these meetings we underscored the importance of ensuring a successful outcome from the Third Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) to be held from 13 to 16 July in Addis Ababa, with concrete deliverables to support the implementation of the new agenda. We also emphasized the need for high-level participation, including at Heads of State level at the conference.

I also attended the World Bank/IMF Joint Ministerial Development Committee. For the first time both the President of the UN General Assembly and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon attended the Development Committee. Participants included the President of the World Bank, Managing Director of IMF and Heads of Regional Development Banks.

High-Level Thematic Debate on Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation

Yesterday, 22 April, we concluded a successful two-day High-Level Thematic Debate on Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation: Fostering Peaceful, Inclusive Societies and Countering Violent Extremism, that I convened in conjunction with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser.

I thank the Secretary-General and the High-Level Representative for organizing this historic meeting with me. For the first time in the General Assembly, member states, religious leaders and other stake

holders exchanged a wide range of ideas and strategies on how to counter the troubling rise of intolerance and violent extremism around the world.

We continue to witness violent attacks being carried out against innocent civilians in places of worship, museums, supermarkets, schools and historical sites. From Paris to Tunis; from Garissa to Yarmouk; from Johannesburg to Peshawar; no person, society or nation is immune from intolerance and the threat of terrorism or violent extremism.

There is no justification for such attacks. Collectively we must condemn all manifestations of intolerance but also take actions to prevent and stop them. The course of violence must be curbed.

Participants during the Debate also recognized the importance of media; as a positive means for engaging and educating citizens and also promoting mutual respect, tolerance and reconciliation. But it was also noted that the media can be misused as to fan hatred, intolerance and as a recruitment tool for extremists.

Yesterday I urged faith leaders to Speak out louder against and denounce those who perpetuate acts of intolerance in the name of religion.

Bilateral Meetings

Earlier this week, I met on 21 April with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq, H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Al-Jafari. We discussed the priorities of the 69th session and exchanged views on international and regional issues.

On the same day, I also met with H.E. Zahabi Ould Sidi Mohamed, Minister for National Reconciliation and Development of the North Regions of Mali. The Minister briefed me on the situation and peace efforts in Mali. I reiterated support of the General Assembly and the importance of reconciliation for sustainable peace and development.

I also met on 21 April with Ms. Laurence Tubiana, France's Special Representative for Climate Change. We exchanged views on the ongoing climate change negotiations and the preparatory efforts for the High Level event on climate change that I will convene on 29 June 2015. The event is aimed at adding momentum to the ongoing negotiations on a new, ambitious and universally binding climate agreement to be adopted at COP21 in December 2015 in Paris.

For all these meetings, my Spokesperson has issued readouts.

South Africa

On 21 April, I met with H.E. Kingsley Mamabolo, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations who briefed me on the steps being taken by the government to deal with the violent attacks targeting foreign nationals in that country, including the appointment of a Ministerial Task Force. I welcome these efforts.

These acts of Xenophobia are unacceptable. I hope that the actions taken by South African authorities will effectively and swiftly address the situation.

Death of African Migrants in the Mediterranean

The death, in recent days, of hundreds of migrants in the Mediterranean, constitutes a tragedy of immense proportions that was entirely avoidable in this day and age.

I call on Member States, the international community and regional organizations to do everything possible, to save lives of migrants through search and rescue. However, we also have to address the pull factors and the underlying causes that contribute to these tragic migrations.

I send my condolences and express the sympathy of the General Assembly to the countries, peoples and communities affected by this tragedy.

Security Council Reform & Revitalization of The UN General Assembly

On the Reform of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, Amb. Courtenay Rattray, the Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiations, is spearheading this process. I welcome his continued work in ensuring an open, transparent and consultative, Member State-driven process. Following the briefing meeting held on 26th march 2015, Member States and Groups have submitted their positions and proposals in a Framework document provided by the Chair.

The Chair will hold interactive meetings scheduled to take place in the first half of May. The Chair will also place the complete submissions from Member States, in an annex to ensure full transparency and for reference purposes.

On the revitalization, the Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Namibia are spearheading the work of the Ad hoc Working Group on the GA Revitalization, and so far three meetings have been held on the general debate, role and authority of the General Assembly, and working methods.

High-Level Thematic Debate Cooperation between The UN And Regional Organizations

I will convene on 4 May 2015, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber, a High-level Thematic Debate on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations.

Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations remains a cornerstone of the work of the UN as recognized in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter and numerous resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Regional and sub-regional organizations continue to play pivotal roles in their respective regions in the areas of peace and security, human rights and development.

I thank you for your kind attention, and will now take a few questions.