

15 May 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the General Assembly Plenary on Humanitarian Situation in Nepal**

Delivered by H.E. Mr. Kaha Innadze, Permanent Representative of Georgia on behalf of President Kutesa

**Excellencies,
Mr. Ban-Ki-moon, Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I thank you for attending this important meeting on the urgent humanitarian situation affecting Nepal and the surrounding region following the devastating earthquake on 25 April and the subsequent earthquake on 12 May.

I express my deepest condolences to all those that have been affected by this terrible tragedy, including the families of those who lost their lives in Nepal, India, China and Bangladesh.

I commend the leadership demonstrated by the Government of Nepal and their steadfast efforts to address this challenging situation. I also thank all Member States, including the neighbouring countries, and organizations that have responded to the crisis.

Excellencies,

Nearly three weeks after the initial earthquake, the situation in Nepal remains of grave concern. In many places, the conditions on the ground are dire, with relief efforts suffering a serious setback following the second earthquake earlier this week.

While long-term recovery and rehabilitation efforts will play a crucial role in rebuilding Nepal, there are immediate concerns that warrant the full support of the international community.

First; the humanitarian needs in the country are urgent and significant. With some 2.8 million displaced people, the provision of shelter is of utmost importance. Every effort must be made to ensure that people living in open spaces have access to basic shelter as soon as possible. Many of the displaced also need food assistance as a vital necessity.

Second; access to health care, sanitation and hygiene services are critical priorities that must be addressed. As we have learned from similar natural disasters, increases in mortality, morbidity and outbreaks of communicable diseases can be prevented through access to basic health care and clean

water. It is critical to improve sanitation and hygiene services to avoid potential outbreaks of cholera and diarrhoea to prevent a second wave of fatalities.

Third; beyond the needs of urban centres, people displaced from rural villages need to be able to return to their homes before the start of the planting season. Failing to enable people to return to their respective villages to plant crops could have severe consequences for the country's food security.

Finally; as we coordinate our relief efforts, we must bear in mind there is only a small window of opportunity to assist the affected communities. With the monsoon season set to start in June, it is of utmost important that a comprehensive relief effort is launched as quickly and efficiently as possible.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Since the initial earthquake, the international community has put forth tremendous efforts to support the people of Nepal. Within hours of the disaster, neighbouring countries and other nations around the world deployed substantial assets, personnel and relief supplies.

To-date, more than 40 Member States have pledged support to the Nepal Earthquake Flash Appeal launched by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, while dozens more have provided in-kind assistance and personnel, field-hospitals, blankets and Urban Search and Rescue Teams.

I commend all those that have demonstrated solidarity with the people and Government of Nepal in the wake of this horrific disaster and urge your continued support going forward.

I thank you.