

27 May 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Africa Day Event**

*Delivered by H.E. Denis G. Antoine, Permanent Representative of Grenada on behalf of President Kutesa*

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you for this reception and deliver this statement on behalf of H.E. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the General Assembly. I thank H.E. Mr. Tete Antonio, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of the African Union for his kind invitation to join in the celebration of Africa Day 2015.

Today provides an opportunity to celebrate the many successes taking place on the African continent, while also reflecting on our hopes for the future.

Indeed, in recent times African countries have made significant strides with regards to political governance, peace and security. Through the adoption of Agenda 2063, the African continent has a comprehensive framework to guide its transformation towards an integrated, people-centred, prosperous and peaceful continent.

The theme of this year's Africa Day celebration "2015: Year of Women's Empowerment and Development" underscores the important role women have in shaping the future of the continent.

The theme is also timely, as we mark the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The empowerment of women as full and equal contributors in African societies and economies is critical for the achievement of sustainable development.

We must take bold decisions to empower women to participate fully in economic, social and political life in all aspects. This will enhance our efforts in building stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities.

Violence against women and girls, in all forms and manifestations, must be eliminated. The norms, beliefs and practices that contribute to gender-based violence must be challenged and changed. Girls and women must be given equal opportunities for education and vocational training, while maternal health must be improved if African countries are to realize their full potential.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

This is a momentous year as we formulate an inclusive and transformative post-2015 development agenda that improves the lives of people around the world.

To successfully reach our development objectives, it will be critical that adequate means of implementation are put in place. The Third Conference on Financing for Development, set to take place in Addis Ababa in July, marks a major milestone in that journey.

In Addis, we will seek to agree upon an outcome that defines a framework for the mobilization of a full range of resources for development public and private, domestic and international. We will also strive to identify ways to strengthen the global partnership for development.

As we celebrate Africa Day 2015, let us renew our commitment to working with African States to ensure that socio-economic and sustainable development aspirations and goals of the continent are realised. We should also build on the progress made, in strengthening cooperation and the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union.

As the world looks to the future, the potential and promise of Africa is as vivid as ever. I look forward to continuing to work closely with the African Union as we transform our shared aspirations into realities.

I thank you.