

8 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the United Nations Summer Academy**

Delivered by H.E. Mrs. Lyutha Al-Mughairy, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman, on behalf of President Kutesa

**Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am delighted to join you today to deliver this statement on behalf of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa, President of the General Assembly.

This afternoon's topic, "The United Nations at 70: Towards a transformative socio-economic development agenda" is indeed timely and relevant.

In October this year, the international community of nations will celebrate seventy years since the founding of the United Nations Organization. The theme of this segment, therefore, gives us an opportunity to reflect on the work and the impact of this global organization since its creation in 1945.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The first half of the 20th century was perhaps one of the most eventful in recorded history.

Politically, the fight for global supremacy resulted in two devastating world wars.

On the economic front, the world experienced one of the worst economic depressions to ever take place.

Such was the world when the United Nations was founded nearly seven decades ago. As evident from the Charter, starting with its opening pronouncement of "We the people", the United Nations was founded to address problems that afflict and challenge humanity's stability and progress.

At its core, it aims at preserving international peace and security by "saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

It also seeks to enhance economic, social, cultural and humanitarian cooperation among nations. Issues such as protection and promotion of human rights; justice and respect for international law and treaty obligations; as well as developing friendly relations among nations were all prioritized in the Charter.

Since its founding, the United Nations has had global reach and impact, working to address a wide range of issues. Amid a constantly changing world order and emerging challenges, the Organization has been at the forefront in finding solutions to global issues across its three pillars, namely; peace and security, development and human rights.

Through its agencies, funds and programmes, the United Nations continues to strive to improve people's lives around the world. It undertakes mediation, conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. It also provides socio-economic services and support, including humanitarian assistance to countries affected by conflict and disasters. Further, it promotes and supports governance, rule of law and human rights.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 2000, world leaders adopted the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), aimed at: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Building on the progress attained in the implementation of the MDGs, the international community is now working to formulate a post-2015 development agenda that is ambitious, inclusive and transformative. While the overarching objective of the agenda will be poverty eradication, the new development framework will cover all three dimensions of sustainable development; social, economic and environmental.

In the spirit of leaving no one behind, the agenda will focus on putting people at the centre, by promoting economic growth and development. Given the ambitious nature of the agenda, putting in place adequate means of implementation in terms of financial resources, technology development and transfer, as well as capacity building, will be critical.

Indeed, the financing needs for sustainable development are enormous.

By way of example, estimates of additional financing that will be needed to eradicate extreme poverty are in the range of US \$135 billion to \$195 billion, per year.

These important issues, as well as many others, will be considered by Member States and stakeholders in the lead up to the Summit in September, when the new agenda is set for adoption by world leaders.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our collective resolve to implement a new sustainable development agenda will fall for short if we fail to also address the critical issue of climate change.

We now have incontrovertible scientific evidence that, mostly as a result of human activity, our planet is warming up at an alarming rate. Indeed, our very existence is under threat.

Snow and ice across the globe are diminishing. Sea levels are rising. Many countries are faced with frequent and prolonged droughts, threatening food security. Floods and landslides have become common place in many countries.

As we work toward the United Nations Conference on Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris in December, it is imperative that Member States pull together their collective will to reach a new, universal and legally binding agreement on climate change.

Indeed, in a year when the world is focused on setting an agenda that ensures a sustainable future, the well-being of the planet must also be taken into account. Our development objectives and protection of our natural environment must be pursued in harmony with each other.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Realizing the transformative socio-economic development that is the theme of this segment will not be achieved at the United Nations in New York; rather implementation must take place on the ground, in cities, villages and communities.

Greater social cohesion, stronger democratic principles and sustained economic growth should be pursued through strong, visionary leadership. All levels of government will have a role to play, including, municipal governments, city councils and parliaments.

The role of civil society will also be critical, given its strong connectivity and understanding of local communities and their needs. The role of the private sector has also become increasingly important.

As we embrace the promise of this momentous year, all stakeholders, including ordinary citizens, have a role to play in ensuring we capitalize on this unprecedented opportunity to change our world, for the better.

From small, rural villages to the world's mega-cities, the new post-2015 development agenda represents the hopes of a future generation that we may achieve sustainable development, while promoting the well-being of people and protecting our planet.

I thank you for your attention.