



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zimbabwe
to the United Nations*

STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT R.G.MUGABE

AT THE

60th SESSION OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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Cheek against Delivery

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Your Excellency the President of the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
Mr. Jan Eliasson,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan ,Distinguished
Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mn President,

Allow me to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of the 60th Session of the General Assembly, and to express our confidence in your ability to guide our work throughout the Session. In the same breath, let me also express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Je an Ping, for managing successfully the very difficult business of the 59th Session.

Mr. President,

Although we began our last Session with a weighty agenda, we were able to reach general agreement on a number of important issues in the area of development. We are yet to agree on other pressing issues, such as the reform of the Security Council and the composition of a new Human Rights Council.

Mr. President,

For many years, we have spoken in favour of an approach to international peace and security that is firmly rooted on the principle of multilateralism and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. We maintain that any diversion from this approach is unacceptable, undesirable and devoid of legal justification. We are pleased to note that the majority of views expressed during the last Session reinforced this principle.

Our expectation is that the Security Council, in its current form, or in whatever character and composition it will eventually take, will, like all other bodies of the United Nations, limit itself to what is contained in its mandate. We do not subscribe to the suggestion that all problems, social, cultural, economic, and health, among others, are necessarily threats to international peace and security and that they should therefore be referred to the Security Council.

Recently, we witnessed the United Kingdom abusing its privilege and acting dishonestly as a member of the Council by seeking to score cheap political points in its bilateral dispute with us. We were dragged on to the Council's agenda over an issue that has no relevance to the maintenance of international peace and security. Let me pay tribute, Mr. President, to those members of the Security Council who saw through this cheap politicking and manipulation of procedures, which the same country, by the way, has vowed to resume as soon as the Council

is appropriately chaired. It is my hope that Member countries will join us in rejecting this neo-colonialist attempt and blatant interference in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe. But, then, is it not obvious that Britain, under the regime of Tony Blair, has ceased to respect the Charter of the United Nations? Witness its being a principal member of the anti-Iraq illegal Coalition that went on a devastating campaign of the country in complete defiance of the United Nations Charter! Any state or group of States that commits such an act of aggression on another, justifying it on blatant falsehoods, surely becomes guilty of state terrorism.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe is a country at peace with itself and with its neighbours and offers absolutely no threat to international peace and security. Is it not, therefore, surprising that Britain and its Anglo-Saxon allies have embarked on a vicious campaign of first peddling blatant lies intended to tarnish it and secondly appealing to Europe and America for sanctions against it? These imperialist countries have unashamedly abused the power of the media by hypocritically portraying themselves as philanthropists and international saviours of victims of various calamities. And yet, Mr. President, they have remained silent about the shocking circumstances of obvious State neglect surrounding the tragic Gulf Coast disaster, where a whole community of mainly non-whites was deliberately abandoned to the ravages of Hurricane Katrina as sacrificial lambs; and sacrificed to which god, one cannot tell. Most of the victims were Blacks, and we are bound to ask what transgressions we, the blacks of this world, have committed? Was it not enough punishment and suffering in history that we were uprooted and made helpless slaves not only in new colonial outposts but also domestically, that is also at home through a vicious system of colonialism? Must we again, in this day of humanitarian ethics, this day of the sacred principles of equality of mankind and the rights of man and woman, this day that has seen us assemble here to save, enhance and prolong life, become victims of callous racial neglect? We of Africa protest that, in this day and age, we should continue to be treated as lesser human beings than other races. We reiterate our deep sympathies and condolences over the massive loss of lives that occurred in the Katrina Hurricane disaster!

If, as we are told, many who survived the wrath of Hurricane Katrina are still on dispersal, the question we ask in our minds is where they are and for how long will they remain dispersed? We ask further whether they will ever get back, truly rehabilitated, to their original homes, at present mere wreckages? Where is the Zimbabwe-famous Habitat, I ask? Why should it maintain ominous silence? For here is real work of the homeless for it! This, indeed, is where it rightly belongs and not anywhere in Zimbabwe!

Mr. President,

With reference to the vexatious issue of the reform of the Security Council, we have made our views known through the African Union. We seek fair and equal treatment as partners in this community of nations, and pledge our commitment to working with others in pursuit of that objective.

Mr. President,

The promotion of human rights is one of the major aims of the United Nations as enshrined in its Charter. As such, the subject rightly occupies space on the agenda of each Session of the General Assembly, including this one. We believe that the United Nations should make every effort to promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights, including the right to development. Regrettably, we have seen over the years, a deliberate tendency to create a distorted hierarchy of rights with the sole mischievous purpose of overplaying civil and political rights, while down-playing economic, social and cultural rights. This explains why the whole human rights agenda, instead of being a cooperative exercise, has degenerated into a Western-managed kangaroo court, always looking out for 'criminals' among developing countries. Hence we continue to argue that the human rights discourse needs to be rid of selectivity and double standards and to be approached without hidden political agendas.

Mr. President,

The African Union has indicated its support for the establishment of a Human Rights Council that will be subordinated to the General Assembly. Zimbabwe subscribes fully to that position. We believe, however, that a correctly-sized and properly structured Council, with equitable geographical representation, will be a major step in addressing the deficiencies of the current Commission on Human Rights.

Mr. President,

At the beginning of the last Session, I informed this august Assembly that, despite the recurrent droughts that we had experienced, Zimbabwe had a capacity to cope with its situation of hunger and was thus not appealing for humanitarian intervention. In spite of that message, our detractors and ill-wishers have been projecting a false picture of mass starvation. There has been none of that. Recently, particularly in the aftermath of our urban clean-up operation, popularly known as Operation Murambatsvina or Restore Order, the familiar noises re-echoed from the same malicious prophets of doom, claiming that there was a humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe. Those unfounded alarms are aimed at deliberately tarnishing the image of Zimbabwe and projecting it as a failed state.

We find it strange and obviously anomalous that the Government of Zimbabwe should be maligned and condemned for restoring order and the rule of law in its municipal areas. Our detractors fail to acknowledge that Operation Restore Order soon gave way to a well-planned vast reconstruction programme through which properly planned accommodation, factory shells and vending stalls are being constructed in many areas of the country for our people. We have rejected the scandalous demand, as expressed in the Special Envoy's Anna Tibaijuka's Report, that we lower our urban housing standards to allow for mud huts, bush latrines and pit toilets as suitable for the urban people of Zimbabwe and for Africans generally. Nothing can be more insulting and degrading of a people than that! Surely, we do not need development in reverse.

Let me conclude, Mr. President, by making my message to our detractors very simple and clear. The people of Zimbabwe came through a protracted guerilla struggle to establish themselves as a free and sovereign Nation. We indeed went through long and bitter times to get our freedom and Independence and to be where we are today. We cherish that hard-won freedom and Independence, and no amount of coercion, political, economic, or otherwise, will make us a colony again. But we also cherish peace and development, and good regional and international relations. Together with all nations of goodwill, we will continue to work tirelessly for a just, peaceful and prosperous world.

I thank you.

RGM/jm