



UGANDA

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ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
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ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ELECTION

**AS PRESIDENT OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York,

June 11, 2014

Mr. President
Secretary-General
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Almost seventy years ago, this organization, the United Nations, was founded, inter alia: to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights; and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. This Organization has since remained central to global efforts to find solutions to problems which challenge humanity, through the common endeavor of all states.

52 years ago, Uganda joined the United Nations family. We are an active and fully committed Member to the organization, moreso to the work of the General Assembly.

I am therefore honored, and truly grateful to you all, for unanimously electing me as President of the sixty-ninth session of this august Assembly. This is not only a sign of your collective trust and confidence in me, personally, but also recognition of the contribution made by my country, Uganda.

I would like to thank, in a special way, my region, Africa, for endorsing my candidature and for the unwavering support I have received.

Mr. President, I thank you for your leadership and ‘setting the stage’ during the current session. A number of intergovernmental processes are on-going, and will feed into negotiations on the Post-2015 development agenda.

I also appreciate your willingness to facilitate transition and continuity in the Office of the PGA.

Mr. Secretary-General, I thank and commend you for your personal commitment, dedication and tireless efforts in advancing the agenda of the United Nations. I look forward to working with you all on our organization's priorities.

Mr. President,

As we gather here today, our world continues to be confronted with different challenges of global reach and impact. They include poverty and hunger; underdeveloped education and health services; unemployment; poor and inadequate infrastructure in many developing countries; insufficient and expensive energy; climate change and rising sea-levels; armed conflicts; and emerging threats to peace and security, such as transnational organized crime, terrorism, piracy and human trafficking.

Collectively, we must continue to take concerted action to address these challenges. This is what has made the United Nations a strong, unique and indispensable organization.

Fourteen years ago, world leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration, committing to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015, with a focus on socio-economic development issues like poverty, health and education. While significant progress has been made in some areas, it has been uneven across goals, countries and regions.

As we work on a post-2015 development agenda, we must ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals being formulated build on the foundation laid by the MDGs. It is also essential that we develop an agenda that is transformative, with eradication of poverty and hunger, and promotion of sustained and inclusive economic growth as its overarching objectives. The agenda should be holistic, action-oriented, and universally applicable, while paying due attention to the different regional and national realities as well as levels of development.

As part of the Post-2015 development agenda, we shall have to address the means of implementation, in terms of financial resources, technology development, transfer and capacity-building. This will require a strengthened global partnership, one that will foster partnerships between and among governments; provide for an increased role of the private sector; ensure a fair international trading regime; and foster national and foreign direct investments.

Our ultimate objective should be to formulate a transformative agenda that supports global solutions, guides national development efforts, and empowers people to improve their livelihoods and determine their own future.

Climate change, which continues largely unabated, is one of the defining global challenges of our time. Its adverse effects are evident in persistent extreme weather conditions, floods, extended droughts and rising sea-levels. No doubt, these effects threaten humanity's very existence. Small Island States, in particular, are becoming increasingly vulnerable.

To preserve Planet Earth for ourselves and succeeding generations, we have an obligation to combat climate change, through, inter alia, mitigation and adaptation measures. Climate change financing and technology transfer will be particularly central to this cause.

It is therefore important that during the 69th Session, we provide appropriate impetus and momentum to the on-going process under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to reach a global agreement on climate change in 2015.

Mr. President,

The coming year will be of historic significance, as it will mark the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations. Today, the world is vastly different from what it was in 1945. While the principles of the organization remain solid, the changing world necessitates that, we adjust to the new and changing realities. Central to this, is the

continuous revitalization of the General Assembly; and reform of the Security Council and other relevant UN bodies. The Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process on Security Council reform has not yet made the desired progress. I will be working with all of you, Member States, to make further progress on this important issue.

At operational level, experience has shown that fostering cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations, positively contributes to development, and maintenance of peace and security.

We have seen many successes in different parts of the world, especially Africa, where the UN and different regional organizations, have utilized their unique and complementary capacities to resolve conflicts. I am convinced that this cooperation has yet to reach its full potential and should be substantially strengthened. I also believe that we should strengthen cooperation and coordination among regional organisations themselves to address common challenges.

We need to exert greater efforts and initiatives towards peaceful settlement of disputes, as envisaged in Article 33 of the UN Charter. Conflict prevention is a cheaper and more sustainable option. In post-conflict situations, we need to step up peacebuilding efforts, and support countries to build effective national institutions. This is essential in avoiding a relapse, and enabling those countries to move towards sustainable peace, reconstruction, economic recovery, and development.

We should also strengthen our collective resolve to counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. Many times, this tension has manifested itself in violent terrorist attacks, serving as a constant reminder of the threat of extremist ideology.

The United Nations Alliance of Civilization is an important initiative, aimed at improving tolerance, understanding and cooperative relations

among nations and peoples across cultures and religions. I will support further enhancement of the Alliance's role in this regard.

Mr. President,

I will focus on further advancing gender equality and empowerment of women in the 69th Session in which we will mark the 20th anniversary of the ground-breaking Beijing meeting, which provided a framework and roadmap for achieving gender equality and women's rights.

Since 1995, the UN and the international community have made significant progress in advancing gender equality, but there still remains a lot of work to be done. This reminds me of the experience of Nabanja, a married woman and mother of four children in Kashongi village, in my parliamentary constituency who acquired land with her husband in 2010. Two weeks ago, Nabanja told me that her husband had sold the land without her knowledge, leaving her and her children with no home and means of survival.

There are several such examples which put in sharp focus the need to seize this historic opportunity to galvanize action and to mobilize all actors for accelerated and effective advancement of gender equality and empowerment of women, under the leadership of UN Women.

I will be sharing with you, in due course, my proposals on how to effectively move all the above priorities forward, with your support.

Mr. President,

I am proposing the theme for the 69th session to be: *“Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda.”*

The theme builds on the important work and progress being made in the current Session. It underscores the need to focus, not only on delivering

or agreeing the post-2015 development agenda, but also, and most importantly, on ensuring its effective implementation.

I am motivated by putting people at the center of everything we do. I am motivated by the need for socio-economic transformation. I look forward to working with you all to develop an agenda that will eradicate poverty and hunger, create sustained and inclusive growth, employment and better livelihoods for all.

In this endeavour, we can all draw inspiration from the words of former President Nelson Mandela, who, in his speech at the “*Make Poverty History*” campaign in London in 2005 said, and I quote:

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom”. End quote.

We truly have a once in a generation opportunity to build the “Future We Want.” Fifty-one years ago, in 1963, President John F Kennedy in his address to the General Assembly said, and I quote:

“Never before has man had such capacity to control his own environment, to end thirst and hunger, to conquer poverty and disease, to banish illiteracy and massive human misery. We have the power to make this the best generation of mankind in the history of the world - or to make it the last.” End quote.

If this applied to his generation 51 years ago, it is even more applicable to today’s generation. The scale and reach of most of the challenges we face, coupled with the limited capacity of many of those worst affected, requires that we address them collectively. The United Nations exists to find solutions through our combined efforts.

I will endeavor to guide the work of the Assembly in an effective manner. My pledge to you all is my firm commitment to be accessible,

transparent, fair and balanced, and I count on your support and cooperation.

I thank you for your kind attention.