

Statement

By

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President of the General Assembly,

Secretary - General,  
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

In the year 2000, we met here and agreed on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015. These are:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

As you can see, these cannot be sustainably achieved unless you achieve socio-economic transformation. This means to build a new society comprising of the middle class and the skilled working class out of the pre-capitalist

societies that normally characterize under-developed countries. Our old society of traditional Africa had and has to undergo socio-economic metamorphosis – just like the insects do – take on new forms of life – egg, caterpillar, pupa, adult, etc. of the same organism.

This means less people in agriculture than in industry and services; more people in urban centres than in the rural areas; no illiteracy; modern agriculture rather than subsistence traditional agriculture or uneconomic colonial cash crops that bring in little for the affected families.

I hope nobody imagined that you could sustainably attain the MDGs at the same time as you maintained a backward economy.

In Uganda we discovered the following bottlenecks to socio-economic transformation:

(i) Ideological disorientation.

- (ii) A weak State – no army, weak police, judiciary and civil service.
- (iii) Inadequate infrastructure such as inadequate electricity, lack of roads, lack of the railway system, lack of ICT infrastructure, etc. Lack of these, means high costs for doing business in a given country. This scares away business. Without business, there will be no employment, no production of goods and services, no expanding of the tax base, etc. It is a vicious cycle.
- (iv) There was also the question of the undeveloped human resource on account of lack of education and poor health. An illiterate and unhealthy population cannot be agents for socio-economic transformation.
- (v) There was the question of small internal markets on account of the colonial balkanization. These had to be worked on through Regional Market Integration. One cannot sustainably produce if

sufficient numbers of people do not buy from him or her.

- (vi) Lack of industrialization and lack of the modernization of the services meant that we continued to export raw-materials at 10% or less of the final value of the final product, thereby losing money and jobs to the outside world. Lack of modern services meant that we would not attract tourists and had to import the services from outside in the form of professional services, medical services, etc. apart from missing the jobs that would be created.
- (vii) Failure to modernize agriculture, again, inhibits the earning capacity of the affected portions of the population and the country, stunts job creation and affects food security.

(viii) Then there was the additional mistake of interfering with the private sector – influenced by an incorrect analysis of the national interest. Was the private sector causing a haemorrhage to the national economy by repatriating dividends or was it creating an infusion of fresh money, knowledge and expanding the size of the economy? Fortunately, this mistake has been corrected in Uganda and in much of Africa.

These are the bottlenecks that directly affected the rate of socio-economic transformation. I do not want to go into the political bottlenecks here.

In Uganda, therefore, we were clear about all these from the very beginning. You could not talk of the MDGs sustainably without talking about these strategic bottlenecks. You could not sustainably base yourself on donor support to cause the achievements of MDGs.

In spite of some mistakes by some of our actors, Uganda has been able to achieve and will achieve the following MDGs by 2015:

- (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – already achieved;
- (2) Achieve universal primary education – already achieved;
- (3) Promote gender equality: – already achieved;
- (4) Reduce child mortality: – achieved;
- (5) Improve maternal health: – slow in achieving it;
- (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases: – on track except for new AIDS infections;
- (7) Ensure environmental sustainability by increasing the electrification of the economy so as to stop the cutting of forests for fire-wood (*enku*) and for primitive agriculture by modernizing agriculture and shifting a greater portion of the population to industry, away from agriculture.

- (8) Develop global partnership by, first and foremost, working for economic and political integration in Africa and for market access to the rest of the world on the basis of mutual advantage. The process of market integration in Africa has already started in the form of EAC, COMESA, SADC, ECOWAS and ECCAS.

As part of the global partnership, we should be very careful not to lose the relaxation in global tensions that came with the end of the Cold War. In the Book Matthew Chapter 7 verses 16-20, it says: *“By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them”*.

A good system will prove its superiority by example. In the Book of Matthew Chapter 5 Verse 16, it also says: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven”.

We do not have to kick up new global tensions in order to deal with the bad guys. Where there is need for international action, then regional and global consensus should be sought so that *“we unite the many to defeat the few and isolate the enemy to the maximum”*, as the late Chairman Mao Tse tung used to say. Where there is need to fight for freedom, the oppressed people can fight for themselves. They do not have to be sponsored by external forces. Those who seek external sponsorship as their primary aim, are suspect to say the least. Still on the issue of global partnership, I cannot forget to point out to the Assembly our anger *vis-a-vis* actors who are beginning to make it a habit to ignore African Union positions on African matters. One of our slogans in the decolonization struggle was: “African for the Africans”. Some people seem to think that that was an empty slogan. Those actors are wrong.

Although the patriotic forces have been taken by surprise by this renewed arrogance by the old mistake makers, they will react appropriately to insure Africa against hegemonism. The latest manifestation of arrogance is from the ICC in relation to the elected leaders of Kenya. Many African countries supported the setting up of ICC because we abhor impunity.

However, the ICC in a shallow, biased way has continued to mishandle complex African issues. This is not acceptable. The ICC should stop. Our advice to them is from very capable actors who know what they are doing and saying. Kenya is recovering. Let her recover. We know the origin of the past mistakes. The ICC way is not the right one to handle those mistakes.

In our struggle for socio-economic transformation, our biggest problem was funding. The small colonial modern economy of Uganda had been destroyed by Idi Amin. Initially, as we struggled for minimum economic recovery,

we had to depend on external funding. Although useful, this external funding was limited, slow in coming, not always focused and erratic.

Although our economy was able to achieve the average annual rate of growth of 6.5% per annum, over the last 20 years, with reliable funding for infrastructure especially, we could have achieved much higher rates of growth.

Now that we have a little bit of our own money, we are able to implement infrastructure projects much faster. Even without oil and gas, we were already able to move much faster in terms of infrastructure development. Of course, additional external funding, if it is focused, sizeable and on time, can be very useful. Without any doubt, Uganda and much of Africa are moving forward robustly. With the resources from oil and gas, we shall be able to fund all our infrastructure needs. The future is bright and our forward movement is irreversible.

I thank you.

