

United Nations Nations Unies

THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LE PRESIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

24 October 2013

Message of H.E. Ambassador John W. Ashe President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, on UN Day

Since its founding in 1945, the United Nations has always been looked upon by the international community as a global organisation that might one day lead to a more just world, grounded in the values of peace, human rights and prosperity for all. Sixty-eight years have now passed and we can safely say the United Nations is needed more than ever. As the world grapples with deadly conflicts and other incidents of violence, environmental degradation, inequality and persistent challenges in meeting development goals, our United Nations provides a unique forum for its Member States to deliberate on matters that most concern the world's people and to work towards common solutions.

Our concerted efforts have led to great successes, in which we can all take pride. Since 1990, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has declined by half; over 2 billion people have access to improved sources of drinking water; child mortality for children under 5 has dropped by more than 40%; and impressive gains have been made in the fight against HIV and AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. We should also acknowledge the UN's role in international peace and security; since 1945, the UN has assisted in negotiating more than 170 peace settlements that have ended regional conflicts and its peacekeeping operations are now deployed on four continents. We can also take pride in the recent adoption of a historic treaty regulating the trade of arms.

Yet, with one billion people still living on less than \$1.25 a day, and a number of persistent or emerging development challenges, much more needs to be done. Many in the international community are keeping track of the days left to the deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We now have less than 800 days to go before the 2015 deadline for the realization of these goals, and we need to fulfil our promises and demonstrate that we can turn our words into concrete actions that make a real difference in people's lives. Furthermore, as we begin setting the stage for our next universal undertaking the post-2015 Development Agenda - we must pick up where the MDGs left off and overhaul our approach to both people and planet to create a universal and shared development agenda, which leaves no one behind.

On this dual track of both accelerating progress towards the MDGs and defining our new development agenda, let us take a moment to recall the ideals and values the founding members enshrined in our Charter. Let the inspiration that led to the founding of this family of nations guide us and inspire us in this new chapter of our shared history.