



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT
BY

H.E. PAUL KAGAME,
President of the Republic of Rwanda

At the 61st Session of the General Assembly of the United
Nations

19 September 2006

Please check against delivery

Madame President,

Majesties,

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Each year the General Assembly of the United Nations provides an excellent opportunity for us to review our collective commitments as reflected in the Charter of the United Nations and later ones like the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

We therefore view the beginning of the 61st session of the General Assembly as an opportunity to breathe new energy into our collective responsibilities articulated at previous conferences and Summits. It is my earnest hope that we shall seize this opportunity to take stock of our successes and shortcomings, and devise practical solutions to realize these commitments, particularly the Millennium Development targets.

Madame President,

Excellencies,

In its preamble, the UN Charter expresses our collective determination to 'promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.' This formed a basis for the Millennium Declaration in 2000, and our renewal of those commitments at last year's World Summit.

All these outcomes of previous conferences and Summits reflect the recognition of our collective interests and responsibilities in addressing the common problems affecting mankind.

Today, there is no greater danger threatening humanity than **extreme poverty**. 40 percent of the world's population, or 2.5 billion people, live in absolute poverty on less than \$2 a day, while more than 800 million people suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

For sub-Saharan Africa, the statistics are even more staggering; in most cases 60-70% of national populations live on less than a dollar a day, while life expectancy at birth is less than 50 years.

This is clearly unacceptable at a time when the rest of world enjoys unprecedented levels of affluence, technological and scientific advancement. For the poor, their daily lives are a phenomenon nobody would wish to live through another day. We must not permit another five years to find out that no progress has been made, and to simply renew the same commitments. We must therefore devise means to do things radically differently, and in an accelerated manner.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

There are a number of areas that require our urgent attention if we must make progress in attaining the **MDGs** by 2015 and eventually eradicating poverty. I will highlight a few, which in our view are the most salient;

Regardless of one's definition of **good or effective governance**, what has been proved is its importance in the sustained socio-economic development of a nation. We believe that key features of good or effective governance include; a political culture that fosters inclusive and competitive participation; robust national institutions that pursue effective and coherent national development strategies;

effective economic management and oversight institutions; and consolidation of the rule of law.

It is our view that by embracing good-governance principles we are setting a stage for the attainment of our global and respective national targets.

Rwanda is strongly committed to these principles, and has submitted itself to the scrutiny of our African peers under NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The APRM is an African initiative aimed at promoting good governance through constructive self-assessment and peer review. We welcome the acknowledgements of the progress we have made in many areas, and commit ourselves to continue to make improvements in the areas identified in the resultant report.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

In the spirit of mutual accountability, it is our belief that the principles of good governance at the national-level should also guide our relations with our development partners. Both sides of the ongoing governance debate should be given adequate and equal attention particularly since aid-effectiveness is also critical to the attainment of MDGs.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Improving the quality and increasing the quantity **ODA** is another important set of measures that would improve development prospects. The quality of ODA should be improved by adopting needs-based approaches, providing more budget support, supporting national poverty reduction programmes, reducing waste and

overheads, and by channeling aid to sectors that enhance productive capacities rather than perpetuate dependence.

It is critical that there is harmonisation of the objectives of trade and development policies by our development partners. Trade policies should complement rather than undermine the attainment of the development goals. We must recommit ourselves, both in principle and practice, to an open, rule-based, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system. Any progress that developing countries like Rwanda might achieve in attaining the MDGs will not be sustainable unless measures are taken to provide a greater opportunity for such countries to access the markets of the developed world and thereby increase household and national incomes.

The attainment of the MDGs would require additionality of resources. We thus consider it essential to increase the quantity of aid. We welcome the decision by some developed States to dramatically increase the volume of ODA over the next few years. We also congratulate those States that have reached or exceeded the internationally agreed 0.7% of GNI for ODA target and welcome the decision by those States that have set timetables to achieve or exceed that target by 2015. The challenge therefore is to translate these commitments into tangible disbursements and implementation of real poverty reduction programmes on the ground.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

The most serious challenge to our development and the attainment of the MDGs is the unprecedented price levels of fossil fuel **energies** on the one hand, and the reduction in hydro-electric generation capacities on the other.

There is a danger that the successes registered so far towards the attainment of the MDGs could easily be reversed if the current energy sector trends continue unabated.

It is critical therefore that we invest heavily in sustainable **alternative energy** sources for the longer-term. In the short and medium term, however, we shall need to find ways to mitigate the effects of the energy price shocks if we are to sustain and accelerate the attainment of the MDGs.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

The 'scourge of war' continues to cause massive loss of human life and blight entire communities. The on-going conflicts in some parts of Africa and the Middle East are a serious threat to **international peace and security**, and require our collective efforts to reach political settlements to these conflicts.

Our painful experience in Rwanda taught us that peace comes at a price. There can be no peace without reconciliation, recognition of the rights and interests of all people, including the rights of States to exist and the right of self-determination. We have learnt that no community's rights can or should supersede another's. We have learnt the value of sharing; the value of communities living side-by-side in peace and mutual respect.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

Rwanda is happy to contribute to the promotion of international peace and security through its military and police contributions to the UN and African Union peacekeeping missions in Sudan, Liberia,

Côte d'Ivoire, and the Comoros. We are committed to continuing these contributions for as long as they are required and as our resources permit.

The Security Council and the UN Secretariat should continue to work towards better conceived and more effective peacekeeping operations, greater participation by regional organizations in conflict resolution, and institutionalizing lessons learnt from the past. There is also an urgent need to institutionalize relations between the UN and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, in the areas of conflict resolution and peacekeeping.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

We warmly welcome the reforms adopted during the last session of the General Assembly. We take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Jan Eliasson, the President of the 60th Session, and all Member States on the reforms, including the operationalisation of the Peacebuilding Commission, the establishment of the Human Rights Council, as well as the renewed commitments to combat HIV/AIDS adopted at the General Assembly Special Session in June.

There has also been commendable progress on management reform, including the establishment of an ethics office, strengthening whistleblower protection and reforming procurement procedures to prevent corruption.

We look forward to working together with other delegations during this session to improve coherence, efficiency and effectiveness within the UN Secretariat, and to continue to review the Organization's mandates, so that the United Nations might be strengthened to better respond to the expectations of Member States.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

It is our hope that this session of the General Assembly might achieve greater progress with respect to UN Security Council reform. Rwanda supports the common African position on this issue, and also believes that reform of the working methods to promote transparency and accountability is most urgent.

The reform process should enable States that are not members of the Council to participate more actively in its deliberative and decision-making processes, especially on issues that affect them. A reformed Council should be seen by all States, especially the smaller ones, to be more accessible, transparent, credible and legitimate.

Excellencies,

In the next couple of months, the General Assembly will elect a new Secretary-General of the United Nations upon recommendation from the Security Council. Rwanda supports the common African position that the next Secretary-General should come from Asia.

As far as the election process is concerned, we appeal for greater transparency in the process in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and basic principles of democracy.

Madam President,

Excellencies,

In conclusion, in today's globalised world, our interdependence has never been more self-evident. As a result, the imperative for our collective action is greater than ever. Once again, the onus is on all of

us to translate our many challenges and opportunities into a shared destiny of peace, security and prosperity for all.

Madam President, I thank you very much.