

*Mission Permanente de la République du Congo
auprès des Nations Unies*



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

**STATEMENT BY
H.E. BASILE IKOUEBE
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
FRANCOPHONIE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
AT
THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE SIXTY-THIRD SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Unofficial translation

Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to pay tribute to the brilliant election of Father d'Escoto to the presidency of the 63rd ordinary session of the General Assembly that is being held at a particularly important moment in the life of our Organization, given the numerous challenges that we have to face.

As so well stated by the Secretary of the United Nations in his report, world problems, more than ever before, require concerted and coordinated actions.

We commend the Secretary General for the resolute action that he engaged since the beginning of his mandate. We highly appreciate his dynamism, his realism and increasing interest that he brings to matters of peace, security and sustainable development.

H.E. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, who was unable to personally attend this present session, instructed me to share with you here, a few thoughts on the developments in our world.

Mr. President,

The challenges that we have to immediately tackle are numerous: They are as follows: peace, security, threats to peoples lives and to nations heightened by the food, energy and financial crisis to which are added natural disasters, climate change and global warming.

By placing emphasis on the notion of solidarity that we fully support, you have certainly illustrated, Mr. President, that if we do not work in as one, we run the risk of folding up our identity, an option that can only offer partial solutions, even uncertain ones, to face the challenges that confront us.

We reaffirm here that the United Nations offers to us the ideal framework to work together in search of solutions that bring in durable impact. This is the sense underlying our constant attachment to multi-lateralism.

The recent events that occurred in different parts of the world, particularly in Europe, reminds us all that, peace and security depend on fragile structures, even in those areas where these matters seem to have been solved definitively.

As far as Africa is concerned, it is still at the center of the concerns of the international community and remains at the top of the agenda of the Security

Council because of the conflicts that continue to render fragile its advancement towards progress, and to hold it hostage to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, therefore Africa will not come out of this situation by proclamation bouts of good intentions.

The High level meeting that we have just held on 22 September on the needs of Africa revealed that it is time to move from promises to sustainable action. This is why we welcome the adoption of the declaration that marked this important event. Similarly, we salute the high level meeting for the MDGs that was just concluded on 25 September. These meetings highlight the leading role and increasing interest of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

As each person knows, the stabilization of the situation in countries of conflict, peace building in others, would not have been possible without the sustained efforts by the United Nations and other bilateral and multilateral partners. Africa, that continues to tirelessly mobilizes itself to manage these situations, highly appreciate the international solidarity.

The African Union and the African sub-regional organizations continue to act in a resolute manner and often with limited resources to face the challenges.

It is largely due to these regional efforts and to the support of other bilateral and multilateral partners that the Central African Republic, to cite as an example our neighboring country, is working towards bring back peace and security through the virtues of dialogue between the Government and the rebel movements.

Still in our sub-region of Central Africa, we wish to call on the international community to double their efforts to assist in stabilizing the situation in the East Region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly by supporting the Government of that country in its fight against the rebel movements and other negative forces in the area.

In this context, the entry into force last June, of the Peace, Security and development Pact of the Great lakes Region will definitely usher in a new climate of confidence around the nerve center of our continent.

My Government fully played its role in the process that contributed greatly to bringing stability to the situation. As concerns the crisis between Chad

and Sudan, we encourage the two countries to pursue all efforts aimed at bringing normalcy to their relations and at consolidating peace in the region.

In this regard, we welcome the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries, an initiative that needs to be further consolidated through putting in place military units of surveillance at the common border lines. These units need to be allocated adequate means to render them operational and efficient, in application of the Dakar Agreement signed in March 2008.

Co-mediator of African Union with Libya in this crisis, Congo will spare no efforts in helping bring these two brother countries to respect the engagements taken, to act in good faith, to finally establish peace between and around them.

Solving the conflict in Darfur would contribute largely to these developments. Which is why we launch a pressing appeal for the effective deployment of 26.000 troops of the hybrid United Nations/ African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), a force that should be supplied with all necessary equipment to become operational and efficient?

For our part, my country has just completed the preparative phase for a police unit composed of 140 personnel that can, from now, be put at the disposal of UNAMID.

However, the international community should also work tirelessly to apply the terms of the Abuja Accord that was signed on Darfur. The parties who are not signatories to the Accord should be targeted and pressure exerted to bring them to the negotiation tables. In this context therefore, we believe that the indictment against the Head of State of Sudan is counter productive.

Still on Africa, we positively appreciate the solution to the crisis in Kenya and the process of reconciliation in Zimbabwe, while at the same time, calling on the African political actors to respect the verdict of the ballot box.

Mr. President,

In its desire to participate in the collective effort in the area of peace and security, my country reaffirms here, its full commitment to the fight against terrorism, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, drug and human trafficking. Congo is fully committed to strictly observe the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in its three facets.

Congo extends an invitation to the international community to consider as urgent, the resolution of the Middle East conflict, on the basis of engagements already taken, particularly the Road Map of Quarter and the Arab Peace Plan,

Our attachment to multi-lateralism makes us believe that there is a pressing need to pursue the work of the United Nations reform, and particularly, that of the Security Council. Faithful to the African Position, my country welcomes the decision to launch, before 31 January 2009, intergovernmental negotiations that should finally enable the matter to really move forward.

Mr. President,

Rightfully inscribed in the present agenda is the matter on the effects of climate change on the environment, one of the major challenges of our times.

My country is particularly sensitive to this item since it has within its borders a considerable part of the Congo Basin, the world's second ecological lung after the Amazon. The countries bordering the Basin have a great responsibility to humanity in the management and sustainable exploitation of the ecosystems, which they are, carry out in a willing and encouraging manner.

While subscribing to the conclusions of the Bali Conference that was held last year and that prepared for the After-Kyoto conference, the Member States in the Congo Basin believe that the policies set out globally in terms of preservation of forest equilibriums, should establish compensation mechanisms. This would include the creation of substitute economies to benefit the populations in the concerned zones.

In expressing these concerns, I avail myself of this opportunity at this tribune, to announce that Congo will host in Brazzaville, from **27 to 30 October 2008**, the 6th world Forum on Sustainable Development devoted to the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Action Plan of Johannesburg, particularly concerning strategic, credible and pertinent partnerships in the achievement of the MDGs. Being held in the African continent, this 6th Forum will serve as an opportunity to African and international actors to focus on challenges that Africa face in the area of sustainable development.

Mr. President,

On the socio-economic area, it is commendable that our present Assembly is focusing on the issues of sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium development Goals.

The 63rd Ordinary Session of the General Assembly placed particular focus on Africa, by setting aside a major meeting to reflect on "The Development Needs of Africa: status of implementation of various commitments, challenges and perspectives".

This theme enabled an analysis on how Africa could achieve the MDGs by 2015.

The analysis indicated that the African states have recorded significant progress with a rate of growth of approximately 6% per annum, and that, as stated in the Secretary General's report, Africa is definitely on the right path and should continue to pursue this commendable work.

This notwithstanding, these efforts and promising outcomes that will follow require real and tangible support. This is why it is important for our partners to keep their promises. Everybody said so here: it is now time for action, not for announcements of intentions!

The current chair of the African Union, H.E Mr. Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, brilliantly described, before this august assembly, the situation in our continent and indicated the way forward. We fully subscribe to the presentation he made here, and at different occasions. We welcome the different partnerships that Africa wove with traditional and new partners. Here once again, the commitments need to be brought to fruition.

Our continent is resolutely committed to the battle for progress that has several facets. Which is why significant importance is accorded to matters of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights within the framework of the Peer Review Mechanism, a pillar of NEPAD, several African countries accept to undergo a periodic evaluation which is in a way, a right to positive interference in the matters of the other member states, matters that are normally fall under the national jurisdiction.

Congo has voluntarily subscribed to this process. This goes to illustrate that Africa holds close to her heart the fight against bad governance, corruption, human rights violations and impunity.

It is therefore inconceivable that certain foreign judges confer to themselves the right to drag African leaders to their national courts in the name of the principle of Universal jurisdiction”, a rule that seem only to be applied to Africa since, as we have already seen, the rule was rapidly dropped when it targeted leaders of powerful countries.

It is regrettable that international jurisdiction, for all that remains respectable, gives an impression of following this road of judiciary fury against the African leaders.

In this regard, Africa has become an experimentation ground for hazardous practices, even hateful ones. The sad memories of the other negative experiences such as slavery, slave trade and colonization are already too much for us to bare. President Kikwete was right to raise this issue here, in application of a decision taken during the Summit of the African Union held in Sharma el Sheikh, in Egypt, last July.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Republic of the Congo went through a particularly difficult period during the 90's, and it managed, thanks to the political will of the government, the political actors and the civil society, to arrive at a national reconciliation. This climate of peace enabled the organization of legislative elections in 2007, municipal and local elections in 2008 that were held in an atmosphere of calm and serenity. This was despite the dysfunction identified during the vote balloting process whose transparency and credibility were not contested by the observers.

With these dysfunction corrected, it is in the same climate of calm and serenity that we are organizing the Presidential election in 2009, in accordance with our constitution.

This climate of restored peace has brought about an economic situation that is increasingly reassuring, supported by improved budget surplus, better debt management within the framework of the Initiative for deeply indebted poor countries and the rigorous measures that enabled Congo to focus ambitious attention on its development and on the progressive achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was drawn within this framework and which enables the country to focus on the attainment of the objectives. This work was elaborated in an inclusive manner, with the support of UNDP.

The principle measures were undertaken in the areas of education and health as follows:

- Free access to education and to text books;
- The recruitment of more than 6000 primary school teachers between 2002 and 2008, thus an average of more than 1000 teachers per annum;
- Construction program for more than 580 new classrooms;
- Free distribution of more than 1 million treated mosquito nets to the population between 2007 and 2008;
- Immunization of about 90% of children aged 1 year, thanks to the Global Program on Vaccination;
- Free access to malaria treatment for children aged 15 and under;
- Free access to HIV/AIDS testing, biological tests and anti-retroviral medication;
- The renovation and construction of more than 12 health centers between 2006 and 2008;
- The establishment of a drug purchase center;

To reduce maternal mortality, the government has taken the following measures;

- Adoption of a road map on maternal, neonatal and infantile mortality;
- Free access to treatment of malaria for expectant mothers;
- Organization of bi-annual mother and child weeks;

Such efforts, however encouraging they may be, can only bear fruit in the long run with the support of external partners, and in a favorable international context as regards thorny issues such as debt, trade, public aid

to development, financing of development and above all else, international peace and security.

You would now easily understand why, more than any other country, a modest member of the international community such as Congo, accords the highest importance to the existence and to the work of our collective Home, the United Nations.

I thank you.