

16 September 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the Opening of the 69th session**

**Excellencies,  
Secretary General,  
Distinguished Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today, I am pleased to address this august General Assembly for the first time as President of the 69th Session. I am deeply humbled and honoured by the trust you have bestowed upon me, and my country Uganda. I am convinced that together we will, as Member States, achieve a lot over the next 12 months in advancing the core values and principles of the United Nations for the betterment of the world and its peoples.

**Distinguished Colleagues,**

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my predecessor, H.E. John Ashe, who presided over the just concluded 68th session of this Assembly. Mr. Ashe has worked tirelessly to promote the work of the General Assembly and on behalf of all Member States, I convey our gratitude to him for his dedicated service. I wish, in particular, to thank him for “setting the stage” with conclusion of intergovernmental processes, whose outcomes will provide key inputs for our work in this session. He also handed over to me a compendium with major activities undertaken in the past year, as a foundation on which to build to address outstanding issues.

I also thank our Secretary-General, H.E. Ban Ki-moon, for his leadership, dedication and personal commitment towards advancing the agenda of this Organization. I look forward to working closely with him, his team and the United Nations system as a whole.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The coming year will be a momentous time for the United Nations. We will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of its founding, the twentieth anniversary of the ground-breaking Beijing Conference, fifteen years since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and ten years since the World Summit of 2005.

It is evident that the 69th Session will be very busy. In addition to dealing with the normal work of the main Committees, we will be preoccupied with negotiations on the Post-2015 development agenda. The key inputs will be the outcomes of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs); the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development; the recommendations from the Structured Dialogues on a technology facilitation mechanism, as well as the forthcoming Secretary-General's synthesis report. We also have preparations for and negotiations on an outcome for the 3rd Conference on Financing for Development which is to be held in July 2015 in Addis Ababa, and the climate change negotiations under the auspices of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

While we have a lot of hard work ahead of us, we also have a historic opportunity to formulate a post-2015 development agenda that is transformative, brings tangible benefits, leads to improved livelihoods for all, and contributes to achieving sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions.

It will also be our responsibility to ensure that adequate means for implementing the agenda, in terms of finances, technology development and transfer and capacity-building are mobilized.

This will require a strengthened global partnership for development, and enhanced cooperation between and amongst member states, the private sector, civil society, and all stakeholders. It will also require a fair trading regime and promotions of domestic and foreign direct investment.

It is for this reason, that I chose the theme of the General Debate of the 69th Session to be "Delivering on and implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda." As I stand in this newly opened magnificent Assembly Hall, I cannot help but think that we are here at the dawn of a new day. Let us approach this pivotal 69th session with a sense of urgency, hope and greater cooperation. Let us seize the moment with a firm belief that a better tomorrow is within reach.

### **Distinguished Colleagues,**

The General Assembly remains the pre-eminent forum for global debate and cooperation amongst Member States. Let us use this unique environment, as intended – to harness opportunities and to find solutions to the challenges confronting humanity. We can, collectively, make a significant contribution this year towards changing the world we live in for the better – not only for ourselves, but for generations to come.

As I emphasised in my acceptance speech last June, we must strive to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda is truly transformative, with the eradication of poverty and hunger and the promotion of sustained and inclusive economic growth as its overarching objectives. It should, as we agreed in the Rio+20 Outcome document "The Future We Want," be holistic, action-oriented and universally acceptable, while also paying due attention to regional and national realities.

To that end, it is my intention to convene three High-Level Thematic Debates and one High-Level Event.

The main objective of the debates and event is to provide an opportunity for member states and all relevant stakeholders to have in-depth deliberations on the selected topics, in an interactive and

participatory manner, with a view to making contributions to the process of formulating the post-2015 development agenda. I wish to stress that the debates and events will not preempt or prejudice the outcome of the intergovernmental negotiations.

The first High-Level thematic debate, to be scheduled in February 2015, will be on the means of implementation for the post-2015 development agenda. Achieving sustainable development will require mobilisation and effective use of finances, technology development and transfer as well as capacity building. It will entail increased investments in social sectors, infrastructure, rural development, climate financing and the protection of global commons, to name a few. This debate will focus on how to mobilize the significant resources that will be needed to turn the aspirations of the post-2015 development agenda into realities.

The second High-Level thematic debate, to be held in March 2015, will focus on Advancing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in the post-2015 development agenda. As highlighted in the outcome document of Rio+20, although progress in gender equality has been made in some areas, the potential of women to engage in, contribute to and benefit from sustainable development has not yet been fully realized. In this connection, the debate will provide an opportunity to focus on measures that must be taken to advance gender equality and women's economic and political empowerment at all levels, as well as the importance of education in these endeavours.

The third High-Level Thematic Debate, to be held in April or May 2015, will address the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes and Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organizations.

Over time, we have seen numerous examples of successful cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations, particularly across my home continent of Africa. As I have stated before, such cooperation has yet to reach its full potential and must be substantially strengthened.

I also intend to convene, in June 2015, a High-level Event on Combating Climate Change, which is one of the defining global challenges of our time. To preserve planet Earth for ourselves and succeeding generations, the international community has an obligation to address the effects of climate change, which threaten humankind's very existence. It is important that in this Session we give momentum and added impetus to efforts to reach a global agreement in 2015 under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

I will provide details including specific dates, format, as well background and concept notes on each of the high-level thematic debates and event in due course.

### **Excellencies,**

One of the priorities I highlighted for this session is continued focus on the revitalisation of the General Assembly and the reform of the Security Council. While some progress towards making the General Assembly more effective and efficient has been made, we need to do more. In this regard, I have

requested the respective Chairpersons of the Committees to pay greater attention to this matter. The need to reform the Security Council is urgent, as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. We need to find a way of making progress in the intergovernmental negotiation process, and I call upon member states to redouble efforts in this session.

As we open this session, the international community is confronted with an unprecedented array of weighty challenges. The list is as lengthy as it is daunting – poverty and hunger; persistent unemployment; violent armed conflicts; faltering education systems; climate change and rising sea-levels; and inadequate infrastructure. Just in recent months, we have seen health systems overwhelmed in the face of new, dire threats like Ebola; while new challenges to peace and security have emerged with alarming frequency, including a rise in polarisation, extremism and terrorist activities. To say we are living in tumultuous times would seem an understatement.

Yet, while the outlook may seem grim, and the challenges daunting, we must not allow ourselves be gripped by fear or despair. Together, with dedication, single-mindedness of purpose and compromise, we can achieve great things. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.” Let us take our hope and inspiration, our belief in a better future, and tackle these formidable challenges with a sense of resolve and resilience over the next twelve months. Now, more than ever, the world needs harmony and unity. The world needs optimism and hope. The world needs all our nations and peoples united, in peace and prosperity.

I thank you for your kind attention.