

20 September 2014

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

**Excellencies,  
Mr. Secretary-General,  
Madame Executive Director,  
Ms. Emma Watson,  
Mr. Kiefer Sutherland,  
Mr. Wolf Blitzer,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to join you at today's special event, which seeks to mobilise all of us, men and women, in solidarity towards greater gender equality. Appropriately named, HeForShe recognises the centuries-old male dominance, and sometimes male discrimination, against our mothers and sisters.

The HeForShe campaign is a direct call for us all to reawaken our collective resolve, especially men and boys to hit a striking end to all forms of existing inequalities and discrimination faced by women and girls.

It cannot be more appropriate, therefore, that leading men in global affairs are at the forefront of this campaign, advocating for and calling all men to action towards gender equality and woman empowerment.

Over a year ago, during celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU), the Chairperson of the African Union Commission made strong and passionate call for action. She remarked, and I quote, "women constitute half of the world's population, but they are also responsible for the existence of the other half", end quote.

Undoubtedly, not empowering women, means disadvantaging more than half of the world's population.

Cognisant of this, I have identified Gender Equality and Women Empowerment as a priority during the 69th session of the UN General Assembly. To this end, I will convene a High-level thematic debate in March 2015, focusing on Advancing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in the post-2015 development agenda.

Nearly 20 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action, Governments, the United Nations and the international community have made significant progress in advancing gender equality and empowering women. Yet, with about a year to the target date of achieving the

Millennium Development Goals, much remains to be done to ensure that women can engage in, contribute to and benefit from sustainable development.

While women and girls are key drivers of development, the scourge of gender violence, inequality and discrimination continues to hinder the promise of better life for many of them across the globe. Gaps in equality are a global challenge and have deep consequences for us all. We must address the barriers that prevent women and girls from realizing their full potential including through economic empowerment, education, increased political participation and decision making.

**Excellencies,**

HeForShe calls on men to stand up for the rights of the women of the world who are their mothers, sisters and daughters. I am happy to add my voice to this call today and I congratulate UN Women on the launch of the global HeForShe campaign.

I thank you.