

13 October 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
to the High-level Panel Discussion on “The Africa we want: Support  
at the UN System to the African Union’s Agenda 2063”**

**H.E Mr. Jan Eliason, Deputy Secretary-General  
Mr. Maged Abdelaziz, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Panelists  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Good morning,

I am honoured to join this High-Level Panel discussion on the occasion of Africa Week 2014. As a son of Africa, I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to share some views on the future of Africa.

I pay tribute to the Special Adviser on Africa, and his predecessors, for their efforts in mobilizing international support for Africa’s development.

**Excellencies,**

The “Africa We Want,” as envisioned in Agenda 2063, reflects the African Union’s vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.

Today, Africa is a continent on the rise, fuelled by a renewed resolve to harness opportunities for its growth and development, while addressing the challenges it faces. With a population of about 1.1 billion people, a combined GDP of over 2 trillion dollars, and impressive rates of economic growth in many countries, Africa continues to be an attractive destination for increased investment. The rate of return on investment is higher in Africa than in any other developing region, and foreign direct investment inflows into the continent reached over US\$ 50 billion in 2013.

The Solemn Declaration on the 50th Anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity/African Union, the Common African Position on the Post-2015 development Agenda, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and Agenda 2063, show Africa’s commitment to its own development.

In particular, the expected adoption of Agenda 2063 this coming January, will be another critical step in shaping Africa’s development over the next 50 years. It is therefore essential to finalize, embrace

and embark on implementation of Agenda 2063, through mainstreaming it into national development plans. As I have said before, it is time for African countries to take control of their own destinies.

The Agenda's strategic aspirations and goals are critical for Africa's transformation. Africa must continue to focus on promoting sustained, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. We are witnessing encouraging trends in this regard. Over the last decade, African economies grew at a rate of 5.6% on average, making it one of the fastest growing regions of the world after East Asia. Many African countries have made commendable progress in improving governance, macroeconomic stability, increasing investments in infrastructure and managing their human and natural resources better.

To further accelerate growth, African countries will need to modernize their agriculture, industrialize more, add value to their vast natural resources, innovate and create more employment opportunities especially for the youth. In order to achieve this, addressing the challenge of inadequate infrastructure, especially energy, transport and ICT, remains critical. While African governments and the private sector are investing about US \$ 72 billion annually in infrastructure development, the funding deficit is estimated at US \$ 50 billion per year.

Therefore, more resources, both public and private, must be mobilized to close this gap and in this regard the African Development Bank, international financial institutions, and the private sector have an important role to play.

One of the ways in which infrastructure deficits can be bridged is through enhancing regional integration and building of road, rail and air linkages. We are seeing promising examples of this under the EAC, COMESA, SADC, ECOWAS, and other sub-regional initiatives that need to be supported.

Accelerating the pace of integration will play an important role in facilitating trade, creating bigger markets, and leveraging different comparative advantages of African countries.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as a framework for pan-African socio-economic development, has done some positive work, but much more remains to be done. Its Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) has huge potential to link and open up Africa for trade and investment. These are huge transformative projects for which we must mobilise financing. The support of the UN System, the international community and continued partnership with the African countries remains instrumental.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,**

Africa's long-term growth will benefit from social and demographic changes. Africa's middle class is growing, and the continent is urbanizing rapidly with nearly 60% of its population projected to be living in cities in the next decade, which provides opportunities in terms of increased consumer demand and also create new challenges. In contrast to dominant trends in the rest of the world, Africa's labour force is currently over 500 million people of working age and is expected to reach 1.1 billion by 2040.

If properly skilled, this constitutes an important demographic dividend that can be harnessed for Africa's growth and development.

Agenda 2063 emphasizes the importance of a peaceful and secure Africa, where development is driven by the people themselves. It recognises the important contributions of women and youth. It envisages an Africa that promotes a shared identity, culture and values. It calls for an Africa that is strong, and an influential partner in global affairs.

The Africa we want must be a continent free of the scourge of violent armed conflict. The African Union has demonstrated its resolve to address conflict through its Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRIC), the Panel of the Wise, and the Continental Early Warning System, among other instruments. Significant strides have been made in promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

In this context, the Partnership between the UN and the African Union has come a long way and should continue to be strengthened. It stands as an exemplary model for cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations. It spans conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, crises and humanitarian assistance, promotion of democracy, rule of law, human rights and development.

As we assess Africa's present situation and look over the horizon, we are faced with the reality that numerous challenges remain. The levels of poverty, inequality, and unemployment are still high in many African countries. Access to healthcare and other basic social services is still low; and vocational training and skills development training is still inadequate. These are issues that must be addressed.

### **Excellencies,**

It will be essential to ensure coherence and synergies between Agenda 2063 and the post-2015 development agenda. In order to address the formidable challenges Africa faces and meet the continent's sustainable development needs, adequate means of implementation, in terms of financial resources, technology development and transfer will be required.

We must continue to work together to ensure this ambitious agenda is realized. It will however require mobilization of greater resources far beyond the continent's shores. ODA commitments should be fulfilled, and other options such as foreign direct investment, a fairer international trading regime, increased role of the private sector, civil society and philanthropy, and sovereign funds, among others, will have to be considered.

As I have stressed before, we must give priority in the 69th Session of the General Assembly to mobilizing the means of implementation for the post-2015 development agenda.

**Excellencies,**

When it comes to Africa's challenges, one needs to look no further than the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa to grasp the interconnectedness of today's world. Challenges we face are not merely national or regional in nature; they are indeed global.

As we envision "The Africa We Want", we must strive to put people at the centre of everything we do, and ensure better livelihoods for each and every one of the continent's citizens.

The Africa we want is an integrated, peaceful and prosperous continent. It must be a place where employment opportunities are available for those who seek jobs, and where children go to bed with full bellies, rather than hunger pangs. The Africa of the future must be a place where an expectant mother eagerly awaits the birth of her baby, rather than quietly fearing death in childbirth. The Africa of the future must be a place where the disabled are able to lead dignified lives with a decent roof over their heads, rather than seeking refuge on the streets.

"The Africa We Want" should not be a distant dream, but rather our collective endeavour. And with resolve, continued commitment, perseverance and support from the international community and the UN system, we should endeavour to make it a reality.

I thank you for your kind attention.