

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 Third Committee**

**Ambassador Mesquita Borges, Chair of the Committee,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you today to address the Third Committee in my capacity as President of the 69th session of the General Assembly.

I congratulate you, Ambassador Mesquita Borges, on your election as Chair of the Third Committee. I am confident that under your competent and wise leadership and with the assistance of the distinguished Vice-Chairs from Albania, Jamaica, Senegal and Sweden, the Committee's work will be conducted in an efficient manner. I also extend my appreciation to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Moncef Khan and the dedicated professionals assembled to support your work.

Let me also take this opportunity to commend the UN Subsidiary Bodies, Agencies, and Funds and Programme for their valuable contribution to the work of this important Committee.

**Excellencies,**

The Third Committee covers a number of areas that are critical to the work of the Organization and the achievement of our overall goals as a community of nations.

Your work on matters related to human rights, one of the main pillars of our United Nations, is essential to ensuring that Member States adhere to our obligations to respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Third Committee makes important contributions on a plethora of issues relating to the advancement of women, the protection of children, refugees and other vulnerable groups, indigenous issues, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination.

Your deliberations give a voice to those who are marginalised, those who are vulnerable, suffer humanitarian crises, exclusion, discrimination and violations of their fundamental rights.

As we prepare to open a new chapter with the formulation and adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, the many items on your agenda lie at the very heart of our pledge to leave no one behind. More than ever, we are called demonstrate our commitment to a more effective, coordinated and inclusive approach to development for all.

Indeed, issues of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work, social integration and social protection remain at the forefront of our development agenda. We have a collective responsibility to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable people in our societies can contribute to and share in the benefits of sustainable development. If we are to achieve our goals, we must put people at the centre of economic and social development.

But while we look to the future beyond 2015, let us not lose sight of our existing commitments. With little more than a year to go before the deadline for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we need to accelerate efforts to achieve the unmet MDGs, including in areas under the purview of this Committee.

Significant efforts are still needed to lift 1.2 billion people out of poverty; achieve universal primary education; end gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls; and improve the health of women and children. We also need to intensify efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, expand prevention efforts, increase access to anti-retroviral therapy, as well as combat malaria, tuberculosis, other communicable and non-communicable diseases.

To ensure progress in the future, we must fulfil the outstanding commitments. We should also raise our ambitions to address the gaps of the MDGs framework. We need to formulate a post-2015 agenda that is transformative and promotes democratic governance, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights for all. We should work towards a single framework and set of goals, universal in nature and applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national circumstances, policies and priorities.

Our path to a sustainable future will be long and arduous. People around the world are looking at us with high expectations. To turn our ambitions into reality, we will need to forge a strengthened global partnership for development and harness efforts, knowledge and resources from all stakeholders, including civil society.

### **Distinguished Delegates,**

Several significant processes will require our attention during the remainder of this year. The launch of the International Decade for People of African Descent will take place in a few weeks from now. On 20th November, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and we will mark the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family on 3rd December. As my Office prepares for these events, I count on the support of your delegations.

I would also like to draw your attention to the programme for the resumed session. In March 2015, I will convene a high-level thematic debate on advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women.

As you are aware, this is one of the key priorities I have highlighted for the 69th Session. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Programme of Action, nearly 20 years ago, Governments, the United Nations and the international community have made significant progress in advancing gender equality and empowerment of women. Yet, much more work remains to be done. While women and girls are key drivers of development, the scourge of gender violence, inequality and discrimination continues to hamper women's full potential to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development.

This high-level debate will be an opportunity to galvanize further action and momentum towards ensuring that women and girls realize their full potential including through education, economic empowerment, increased political participation and decision making.

I will also convene thematic debates on Means of Implementation for a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda, and on Cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as a high-level event on Climate Change. I look forward to your active engagement, and encourage all delegations to participate at the highest level possible.

**Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,**

To conclude, I count on your support in ensuring that this session proceeds with efficiency and that discussions take place in a constructive atmosphere with a prevailing spirit of compromise.

I wish you success in your efforts and deliberations. You can be assured of my steadfast support and that of my Office as you continue your important work this session.

Thank you for your attention.