

21 October 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
to the Fourth Committee**

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to address the Special Political and Decolonization Committee this afternoon. I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and other Bureau Members on your election, and look forward to the successful conclusion of the Committee's work.

I recognize that the Acting Head of the Department of Public Information is here to discuss today's agenda item, Questions Relating to Information. The Department has been instrumental in implementing the United Nations system strategy in the field of information and communications and is called upon to continue enhancing the visibility of the General Assembly. At this point in time, it is essential that it spreads awareness about sustainable development and mobilizes support for the post-2015 development agenda as well as other important issues on the agenda of the 69th session. They deserve the continued support of Member States.

This Committee has historically played a crucial role in discussing challenging, yet important issues on the agenda of the United Nations. From decolonization to peacekeeping issues, the Committee is playing an important role towards promoting the purposes and principles of the Organization.

As for this Session, I understand the Committee has already concluded items related to decolonisation and peaceful uses of outer space. I am glad to share with you some thoughts on some of the issues on the Committee's Agenda.

Excellencies,

As you well know, we are in the midst of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, proclaimed by the General Assembly in 2010. By this resolution, the General Assembly affirmed willingness to take all necessary steps to accelerate the decolonization process, with a view to the total elimination of colonialism by the end of the current decade.

While there is still work to be done, it is noteworthy that we have made remarkable progress on decolonization. Indeed, this is one of the greatest success stories of the United Nations. At the time of

its establishment in 1945, almost one-third of the world's population lived in Territories under colonial administration.

Today, about two million people remain in the 17 Territories that are still officially classified as non-self-governing. The progress we have made gives me a good reason to believe, that with the necessary political will, we can bring closure to this colonial legacy. Each new day gives us an opportunity to make history; and create a world free of colonialism.

As we learned from the recent summer's tragic events, the situation in the Middle East remains fragile and requires the sustained attention of the global community. During the General Debate last month, we heard many delegations voice their concern regarding the situation and express support for a two State solution, taking into account the legitimate concerns of Israel and Palestine. Many Member States called for the United Nations to play a more decisive role in this regard. Regrettably, as we meet here today the path towards peace remains uncertain. The challenge remains to support the parties overcome their differences and return to direct talks. The United Nations should continue to play its role and support the parties in their efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Excellencies,

Peacekeeping, peacebuilding and special political missions continue to play a critical role in the promotion of peace, security and stability worldwide. These form the core mechanism at our disposal for conflict prevention and resolution, and we should support them. The international security environment where such missions take place is increasingly complex and unquestionably challenging. In many countries, these missions operate in a very dangerous and fragile security environment, which generates risk to the United Nations personnel and assets. Recently, in Mali, United Nation peacekeepers lost their lives and so have others, fallen in the line of duty in other places. We must stand united in condemning those who attack and kill peacekeepers.

The men and women who take part in these missions not only deserve our gratitude, but also require an efficient system that provides them with clear mandates, guidance, resources and training. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations has so far done good work in this regard, and I encourage it to continue.

As recognised by chapter VIII of the Charter, regional organisations have continued to play an important role in the maintenance of peace and security. In many ways, the United Nations and regional organizations have unique and complementary capacities that, when properly coordinated, and utilized can contribute decisively to the prevention and management of armed conflict. In recent years, we have seen these relationships strengthened and deepened across a wide spectrum of activities, including peacekeeping. Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU), for example, has yielded positive results in Somalia. The UN has also worked alongside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Furthermore, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and its members played a positive role in support of UN efforts in the UN Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

Throughout this session, it is my intention to promote such cooperation, recognizing the unique expertise regional and sub-regional organisations offer. These regional groups have an important role to play in peace and security issues due to their comparative advantage and geographic proximity. As I have mentioned before, in this regard, I will convene a High-level thematic debate on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the second quarter of 2015.

Excellencies,

Finally, it is noteworthy that during your deliberations on the International Cooperation on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the Committee convened a panel discussion addressing sustainable development within the context of the post-2015 development agenda. Use of space and space based technology can contribute to global sustainable development, including food security, water management, disaster risk reduction and early warning. I therefore, encourage Member States to promote and increase international cooperation for Peaceful Uses of Outer Space for the benefit of humanity.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and assure you of my steadfast support as you continue your important work this session.

Thank you for your attention.