

10 December 2014

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Pledging Luncheon for the Permanent Memorial to Honour the
Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade**

**Mr. Serge Letchimy, President of the Regional Council of Martinique,
Excellencies,
Mr. Deputy Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to be with you this afternoon and to host this Pledging Luncheon for the Permanent Memorial to Honour the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. My appreciation goes to the Global Sustainable Development Foundation for sponsoring this event.

Today we are privileged to be joined by many well-wishers and supporters, including the delegations that have travelled all the way from Angola, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Martinique and the Republic of the Congo.

This is also my first opportunity to officially congratulate Mr. Rodney Leon on his outstanding design for the Memorial, which will occupy a place of prominence on the grounds of the United Nations.

Dear Friends,

But as we honour the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, the grim reality is that modern slavery exists; it did not end with abolition in the 19th century. This practice still continues in one form or another. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) around 21 million men, women and children around the world are in a form of slavery. But we must remember that apart from physical slavery, the greatest of all slavery is the slavery of the mind. Today's event is a reminder that combating slavery requires the combined efforts of us all. Together, we can end slavery in our lifetime and we must. We owe this fight to this generation and future generations.

The Memorial therefore will serve as an important tool to educate and inform current and future generations of the causes, consequences and lessons of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The Memorial will also serve as a key educational outreach tool throughout the International Decade for People of African Descent.

Friends, although we are almost to the finish line, we are not there yet. There is still some ground to cover in terms of the remaining cost of erecting the Memorial. That is why this event is so important.

I would like to applaud the Permanent Memorial Committee, including Chairman, Ambassador Rattray, the Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations, for their steadfast dedication to completing this important Memorial.

I join the Committee in asking for your generous support today to close the Memorial's \$500,000.00 budget shortfall and ensure its final construction.

I thank you for attending this event, and much like you all, I look forward to the International Day of Remembrance activities on 25 March 2015, when the Permanent Memorial will be inaugurated.

Thank you.