

20 January 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Briefing on the Ebola virus outbreak**

**Excellencies,
Mr. Ban-Ki-moon, Secretary-General,
Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of
the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER),
Dr. David Nabarro, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Ebola,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you here today. At the outset I would like to congratulate Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed on his recent appointment. I also thank Dr. David Nabarro for his continued leadership on this important issue.

The steadfast efforts of the people and national governments in the affected region deserve our recognition and deep appreciation. Their courage in the face of a most daunting challenge has been commendable. Efforts by regional and international partners, including the United Nations system, the African Union and ECOWAS have made a tangible difference. Healthcare workers, humanitarian staff and ordinary civilians have also demonstrated great bravery in support of the Ebola response, often at great peril to their own well-being.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Through our collaborative efforts, we have seen some important progress in slowing the spread of new Ebola infections. Indeed, the situation continues to stabilize in the three most affected countries. Mali was also recently declared “Ebola free”, which is an encouraging step.

Significant improvements in reducing the spread of the disease have been made thanks to progress in case identification and contact tracing; isolation and treatment; as well as safe burials and social mobilization.

Nevertheless, the outbreak is not yet over. The international community cannot let its guard down and instead, must re-double its efforts in support of both the short and long-term needs of the most affected countries.

Although the overall outlook is improving, serious areas of concern remain. While the number of new cases is decreasing in Liberia, the situation in Guinea continues to fluctuate. The picture in Sierra Leone remains challenging, with the highest incidence of transmission taking place in the western part of the country.

Cooperation across the most-affected countries, and indeed the region as a whole, has improved. Still, with a broad range of actors playing integral roles in the recovery efforts, greater emphasis must be put on strengthening coordination of efforts.

Esteemed Colleagues,

As we shift from the immediacy of the initial outbreak, we must now direct our attention to the region's long-term recovery effort. The Ebola crisis has been multi-faceted, affecting nearly all segments of daily life.

Markets for essential goods struggle to remain open, children continue to be out of school and critical planting cycles have been missed. Indeed, the impact of Ebola is being felt all the way down to the village level.

The affected countries and their peoples yearn for normalcy. Steps should be taken to resume normal travel to and from the region, including tourism. The private sector should also explore ways to resume full-scale operations in the affected countries. Such steps will be powerful expressions of confidence.

The forthcoming UNDP recovery assessment mission, requested by the Secretary-General, will help identify the critical areas for recovery interventions. The study will also contribute to the design of integrated, multi-sectoral national and regional recovery plans and help frame future discussions on how the global community can support these efforts.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Collectively, the global community has risen to the occasion and shown unprecedented solidarity in the face of the Ebola crisis. However, our work is not yet done. We must remain steadfast in our resolve; not only to bring the number of Ebola cases to zero, but also to ensure the full recovery of the most affected countries.

Thank you for your attention.