

20 April 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of A China Story (III) “From Diversity, Tolerance to a
Community of Common Destiny: The One Belt and One Road
Initiative and a New Model of International Cooperation”**

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to attend this annual conference of “A China Story” that will look at the incredible story of China, one of the world’s fastest growing economies and its contribution to international peace and development.

2015 is a remarkable year and an important milestone for the United Nations. It marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The General Assembly will hold a number activities to commemorate the anniversary.

This year, the UN is focusing on the three major development processes: first, the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda; second, the financing for development conference in Addis Ababa this July; and the third, the negotiation on a new agreement on climate change in Paris in December this year. I look forward to China’s continued active participation and support on these issues.

I have received positive feedback from various Chinese leaders that I have met in recent times. During my visit to Beijing last year, I was assured by Premier Li Keqiang that China will firmly support ongoing efforts in the UN General Assembly to formulate a new development agenda that is transformative and inclusive in bringing tangible benefits to ordinary people, particularly in developing countries.

Furthermore, when I met Foreign Minister Wang Yi this February at the UN, he reaffirmed that China would actively participate in these processes. I welcome China’s commitment and continued support to the on-going work of the United Nations.

In the last 20 years, China has played a crucial role in advancing South-South cooperation with its vast economic potential. I commend China for providing long-term support and assistance to developing countries and also the role it plays in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Recently, I was happy to learn that through land and maritime interconnection, China’s “One Belt and One Road” initiative aims at integrating Eurasia’s economic development and also interconnectivity and cooperation with Africa. It is my hope that this initiative will facilitate practical economic cooperation and development of all countries along the routes, most of which are developing countries.

Coming from the developing world and Africa in particular, I can say that China's "Belt and Road" initiative and Africa's development strategy in the 21st Century share the same vision of strengthening integration through infrastructure development and increasing trade. This initiative is an important reminder to us all that successful development of each one of our countries is linked to the economic growth of others. Combining the two strategies therefore will create opportunities and momentum for the realization of the new global development agenda beyond 2015. It also presents a new approach for South-South cooperation.

It is significant that this initiative also aims at facilitating people-to-people exchanges. A few weeks ago, President Xi Jinping highlighted the importance of inclusiveness and mutual learning among civilizations at the Boao Forum for Asia. His message resonates well with the ongoing work in the 69th session of the General Assembly. In the next two days, in conjunction with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, I will convene a High-Level General Assembly Thematic Debate on "Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation: Fostering Peaceful, Inclusive Societies and Countering Violent Extremism".

The main objective of the high-level thematic debate is to provide an opportunity for Member States and faith leaders, along with other stakeholders, to share experiences and address key issues and challenges relating to the promotion of tolerance and reconciliation with the aim of fostering peaceful and inclusive societies and countering violent extremism.

I am happy that Dr. Patrick Ho of the China Energy Fund Committee will take part in this high-level thematic debate to share with us the practical strategies to foster peaceful, inclusive societies from the civil society perspective.

Let me finally wish you a successful conference and fruitful discussion.

I thank you.