

30 June 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of “Transformative Power of Art” Exhibition**

**Excellencies,
His Excellency, Mr. Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to welcome you to this “Transformative Power of Art” exhibition, and thank you all for joining me this evening.

For the past several weeks, delegates, staff members and visitors alike have had the opportunity to enjoy this vibrant and indeed, powerful exhibition. The bright colours and textures of the exhibit have brought a certain palatable energy to this space, capturing the attention and imagination of those passing through.

The central theme of my presidency has been transforming and changing people’s lives across the world, in a sustainable manner. The theme for this exhibition, therefore, is informed by this aspiration.

I am glad that the curator, Fabrizio Ruggiero, has brought these distinctive pieces together in a unique fashion; blending abstract works featuring natural, earthly materials such as lime, wood, iron and mortar. The art pieces on exhibition bring out humanity’s transformative power. Simple elements from our natural environment have been transformed into masterful pieces that not only captivate the eye, but also portray our way of living. Art can indeed transform lives.

Beautifully blended with the art works, are portraits of some of the most recognizable and influential people of past and present generations. Through their works in music and dance, theatre, poetry, literature, photography, civil rights advocacy, girl child education and women empowerment, they have collectively impacted and transformed our lives in one way or another.

The end result is a certain harmony between elements of our natural world and the humans that grace it.

I am especially pleased to note that we are joined this evening by one of the personalities featured within the portrait collection; Mr. Pierre-Claver Akendengue, a musician from Gabon. This evening, we will have the opportunity to enjoy Mr. Akendengue’s music, during our “Transformative Power of Music” concert, where I am told he will perform his famous piece “Marié Avec”.

My appreciation goes to Nina Muzzi, whose artistic contributions also grace this exhibit, and to Sheri Yan of the Global Sustainability Foundation, who helped make this installation possible.

I now invite the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to share with us a few remarks.