

18 August 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,
President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly,
at the International Young Leaders Assembly**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to join you today to deliver a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly for this fourth International Young Leaders Assembly – IYLA. I commend the partners and co-sponsors who have extended their efforts and resources towards this noble initiative.

Since its inauguration in 2012, the IYLA has hosted many young leaders like yourselves, including students and young professionals from around the world. This programme provides a unique opportunity for you to engage with global institutions such as the United Nations and to reflect on strategies and approaches to drive positive change in your communities.

As we discuss this year's theme – “vision, service and entrepreneurship as the foundations of moral and innovative leadership” – I will touch on two aspects, namely “service” and “moral leadership”.

So what does service and moral leadership mean for young leaders today?

Leaders who are moral, aspire to serve and build the capacities of others. They do not strive to further their own interests and power.

Moral leadership is driven by a profound sense of ethics and values in the pursuit of a greater goal.

Moral leadership challenges all leaders, young and old, to “lead by example”, to hold themselves to a high moral standard and to be accountable to the people they serve.

The complexity of our global challenges calls for a new generation of moral leaders. We need innovators and problem solvers who can inspire positive change in their societies. You are tomorrow's leaders, and as such, I encourage you to embrace moral leadership as you work towards shaping a sustainable future.

Over the last two decades, youth and issues affecting them have taken centre stage in conversations across the international community. In the General Assembly, we have heard many voices recognizing the great potential of youth to contribute to peace and sustainable development.

On the 1st of June this year, the President of the General Assembly convened a High-level event on the “Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment”. One of the key messages that emerged was the importance of human capital development, with a specific call to provide young people with quality education, training and skills development. Many underscored the need to reduce skills gaps and match education and professional training with the evolving needs of the labour market.

The inaugural celebration of World Youth Skills Day last month presented another opportunity to exchange and reflect on the strategies and policies required to help young people realize their full potential.

The focus of this Assembly on innovative and moral leadership also reminds us of the need to develop youth leadership capacity. In this respect, entrepreneurship and problem solving, innovation and creativity, communication and commitment are essential skills that can pave the way towards civic engagement as well as community and democratic participation. These are the leadership attributes I encourage you to develop so that you can have a voice in decision-making processes.

Twenty years ago, Member States adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY). From education to employment, from girls’ and women empowerment to health, the WPAY is a policy framework with practical guidelines to improve the well-being of youth and support their full participation in society.

On the 29 of May this year, the President of the General Assembly convened a High-level commemorative event to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of this landmark programme of action. The meeting was an opportunity for Member States and relevant stakeholders, including youth representatives, to take stock of progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. Participants shared experiences, and identified gaps and challenges as well as the best way forward for the Programme’s effective and accelerated implementation.

Throughout the event, participants emphasized the critical role of youth towards the achievement of sustainable development. This September, world leaders will adopt a new development agenda for the next fifteen years.

This agenda is inclusive, transformative and brings together the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. It is an unprecedented opportunity to set our world on a sustainable path and secure peace and prosperity for current and future generations.

In this ambitious endeavour, the young generation, will be the transformative force that will turn this vision into reality.

As we are about to usher in a new era of development, I call upon all of you, young leaders, to be true, conscientious and committed to serve humanity with humility and distinction; for this is the essence of young leadership.

As Nelson Mandela once said, "A fundamental concern for others in our individual and community lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dreamt of."

The opportunity for your generation is now.

I thank you for your attention.