

GHANA



PERMANENT MISSION OF GHANA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
19 EAST 47TH STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
TEL. 212-832-1300 • FAX 212-751-6743

Please check against delivery

STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. JOHN AGYEKUM KUFUOR
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

**AT THE 61ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS**

SEPTEMBER 2006
NEW YORK

Madam President,

Ghana, like many other nations here, is delighted and feels proud to see in the Presidency of this august body, a distinguished lady endowed with excellent diplomatic skills, such as you. We have no doubt that you will continue the skillful stewardship of your predecessor Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Foreign Minister of Sweden, who presided over the 60th Session of the General Assembly.

Madam President, Ghana welcomes also the Republic of Montenegro, as the 192nd member of the United Nations and looks forward to the day when this Organization will attain full global and universal membership.

A year ago, we met at this historic venue to adopt the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document in which we acknowledged that peace and security, and development and human rights were the pillars of the United Nations system, and the foundations for our collective well-being.

We also recognized that these pillars were interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and that while each country had the primary responsibility for its own development, their individual efforts should be complemented by supportive global programmes, measures and policies aimed at expanding development opportunities especially for developing countries.

Ghana therefore, attaches the utmost importance to the Summit's decision that developing countries should adopt and begin to implement by 2006, such requisite national strategies as would enable them achieve the goals and objectives agreed upon, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thus, Ghana has been working relentlessly towards this end, in the firm belief that our development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, will support us in our efforts to improve the living conditions of our peoples. For effective implementation, all concerned must show commitment and dispatch.

Ghana recognizes good governance as crucial for sustainable development. She has therefore worked assiduously at establishing a robust culture of democracy, sound economic management and adherence to the rule of law. The free and fair elections that have been held successfully in Ghana over the past fifteen years bear eloquent testimony to the determination of Ghanaians to create an equitable, free and stable society in which each individual can develop his or her full potential.

The media, freed from intimidating legislation, have blossomed into a vibrant watchdog for the probity and accountability expected of the governors, and the responsibility expected of the citizens.

It is against this background that Ghana readily submitted herself to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) under the New Partnership for Africa's

Development (NEPAD) to have an objective assessment of her institutional structures for the improvement of her governance.

But, Madam President, our collective objective within this organization to alleviate the economic plight of the majority of mankind may continue to elude us unless the pursuit of international peace and security is effectively and satisfactorily addressed. Ghana, therefore, views with grave concern the continuing spread and persistence of terrorist activities. The international community must rally to contain and effectively eradicate this menace to mankind.

In this regard, the Secretary-General's proposal for a global counter-terrorism strategy is welcome. Indeed, it is the view of Ghana that there must be a quick conclusion of the deliberations on the proposed Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Yet another scourge to the security of the world is the snail-paced talks on the elimination of nuclear weapons, and the added threat of the proliferation of these weapons.

Ghana shares the concerns of the majority of member states that this body must continue with, and intensify its pressure for the total elimination of these weapons. For as long as 27,000 nuclear weapons continue to exist, as they do now, our world will remain vulnerable to the threat of mass destruction.

Madam President, we make this appeal not unaware of the positive uses of nuclear energy. But, for as long as those nations which already possess these weapons and those on the verge of breaking into the mastery of the technology do not show transparency with their know-how, the world will feel insecure. So Ghana appeals to such nations to show candour and transparency in their co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Commission by their compliance with the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Madam President, the spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is yet another scourge, especially for Africa. This Organization's collective efforts to rein in this menace since 2001 have indeed yielded significant results. However, we are still far from achieving the desired target. This is borne out by the outcome of the recent Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action. Ghana therefore welcomes the current momentum within the international community to move closer to the ultimate goal of drastically removing the menace.

Madam President, without doubt, the UN's responsibility for maintaining international peace and security has been tremendously facilitated by peacekeeping operations in many troubled spots around the world. Ghana has been a dedicated and regular contributor to these operations. She is so committed because of her conviction that the lack of peace and stability in any country can have far-reaching negative repercussions beyond its immediate borders. We therefore commend

moves to enhance the United Nations peacekeeping activities of bringing hope to victims of conflict.

African nations are more and more demonstrating their pro-active commitment in the management and resolution of conflicts on their continent. This is why Ghana commends and supports the Secretary-General's determination to take the necessary measures to effect the envisaged close partnership between the UN and the African Union in this sphere. Deepening Africa's peacekeeping capacity to meet this challenging mission, through training, logistical and financial support is crucial to the success of this goal. The decision taken at the 2005 World Summit in this regard must, therefore, be expeditiously implemented.

Madam President, a monumental product of the Summit was the birth of the Peace Building Commission (PBC) of which Ghana is a member. Our expectation is that the thirty-member Commission will discharge its functions diligently.

Another significant milestone achieved by this Organization was the establishment of the Human Rights Council. I must express appreciation to this august Assembly for electing Ghana with the highest number of votes to the Council.

Madam President, the many resolutions and launches of various Commissions clearly indicate the determination of our Organization to make the world a better and safer place for mankind. The truth however is that, for this desire to be actualized, the UN must undergo more radical reforms and be better equipped to effectively implement its decisions. Such a streamlined Organization will create the critical mass for tackling effectively the many challenges that threaten international peace and security.

Thus, the debate to reform the Security Council based on the principles of democracy, sovereign equality of states and equitable geographical representation among others, is very much in order and must be supported.

Madam President, permit me at this stage to try to discharge an honourable duty that I feel uniquely placed to undertake. This is to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Koff Annan who is my compatriot and my friend, at the end of his exemplary tenure.

He has brought so much honour and distinction to our nation Ghana by his excellent stewardship of the UN over the past 10 years.

Indeed, his entire adult career over the past 40 years has been at the exclusive service of this Organization through whose ranks he rose till he attained the pinnacle 10 years ago. His dedicated and illustrious service during the first 30 years led to his historic election as the first ever career officer to become Secretary-General.

Destiny also marked him out as the Secretary-General to end the last century and also usher the Organization into the 21st century. It cannot be disputed that these 10 years of his tenure have witnessed the phenomenal acceleration of the world in the process toward globalization.

He can also claim some credit for having succeeded in shepherding deftly our Organization through the complicated and transformational challenges that the times confronted it with. He has been able to give this masterful leadership not only through competent administration, but also, in ideas as well as lofty humanistic ideals.

His vision for a more proactive Organization, able to respond to the challenges of the 21st Century has been lucidly published in his report "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All".

He is a much decorated personality all over the world, and his winning the Nobel Prize for Peace especially attests to the quality of human being he is. There is no doubt that he retires with an enviable legacy of contributing immensely to shaping the destiny of this Organization and the affairs of the world. Ghana is proud of and looks forward to receiving him heroically at home. I say to him in our language "AYEKOO", meaning well done!

I thank you Madam President.