

Statement by
His Excellency, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR,
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
At the High-Level Summit of the United Nations, General Assembly
New York, 14 September 2005.

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as President of the 60th Session of the General Assembly during which very vital events in the life of our Organization will take place. As we mark the 60th, Anniversary of the founding of our organization, we are not only reaffirming the Vision and hope of 1945, but also hoping to reform its organs as well as working methods so as to make it better able to serve us in today's world that is radically different from 1945. One such difference is today's global economic landscape characterized by pockets of affluence and mass abject poverty.

Ave years ago, at the turn of the century, we adopted the Millennium Declaration including the Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs) which set targets for us to address major development problems of the world, especially in the developing countries. The MDGs emerged from a collective resolve to address and build on the reinvented notion of partnership between the weak and the strong, rich and poor, and among the peoples of the world. While this partnership was premised on shared responsibility, it did not ignore the vital principle of common but differential obligations.

In pursuit of the MDGs and our national economic development objectives, Nigeria has drawn up and embarked upon conscious efforts to realize set targets encapsulated in the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy

(NEEDS). NEEDS is a home-grown, people-centred medium term strategy designed to generate wealth, create employment reduce poverty, and promote value reorientation.

Following the implementation of NEEDS, in the last two years, our agricultural production has grown by about 7 per cent, industrial capacity utilization has doubled and GDP has grown at an average of more than 6% per annum. On all other sectors, we are making appreciable progress even as we need more assistance.

In spite of this progress, we recognize that poverty is still acute in our rural areas and unemployment is still a recurring issue particularly in our urban areas where the youth, mostly unskilled, have flocked. Besides, we are conscious that for a developing country like Nigeria that really wants to transform its economy, we need an annual GDP growth of about 10%. So we still have a big challenge ahead which will require increased support from our development partners as well as from investors.

Mr. President, in order to attain the goals of reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, Nigeria has initiated a health sector reform aimed at raising the standard of primary health care and vastly improving health care delivery services in our hospitals. Early this year we launched the National Health Insurance Scheme to encourage widespread and timely resort to medical consultation health care delivery and development while providing and treatment of illness as well as prenatal and postnatal care. Among other

achievements, child mortality is slightly down; HIV prevalence declined, and the campaign against polio and malaria are yielding results.

We consider global partnerships in the pursuit of MDGs as imperative. For a developing country like ours, we agree that the primary responsibility for socio-economic development in our country rest with us. Nevertheless, our efforts must be complimented by global support. We need all the assistance we can get from our development partners to make possible the achievement of the goals set by this august Assembly five years ago. The major problem has been inadequate resources. This is why developed countries should fulfill their own side of the Millennium Declaration as expressed in the targets set in the MDGs. As clearly stated in the Millennium Project Document as well as in the report of the Africa Commission, it is necessary to double the current level of resource flows to Africa if the continent is to meet the MDG's by 2015.

Mr. President, conscious of the vital role that peace and security play in economic and social development, Nigeria considers conflict resolution as a vital precondition for the successful implementation measures for attaining the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In this regard, Nigeria has been working tirelessly with ECOWAS and the African Union by intervening to stop conflicts and instituting solutions to the underlying causes of conflicts.