



Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Armando Emilio Guebuza
President of the Republic of Mozambique
at the United Nations High-Level Plenary Meeting

New York, 15 September, 2005

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the People and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, and on my own behalf, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of this important and historic High Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that under your enlightened and skilful guidance, our deliberations will be crowned with success.

Allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate the solidarity and condolences of the people and the Government of Mozambique to the American people and to its Government for the human losses and destruction caused by "Hurricane Katrina".

We wish to commend the Secretary General for his leadership and tireless efforts aimed at reforming the United Nations with the view to making it more effective in addressing present and future challenges. In this context, we congratulate him for his report *In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*, which constitutes the basis for our discussions.

The adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), five years ago, was, Mr. President, a firm commitment by the international community to halving extreme poverty, accelerating human development and facilitating the gradual and effective integration of the developing world into the global economy.

Despite the progress made so far, we note, with great concern, that abject poverty remains a feature of the majority of the developing countries. In Africa for instance, data available indicate that most countries in the Continent are far from achieving most or all of the MDGs.

As we are gathered here to take stock of the progress so far made in the attainment of these goals, we should renew our political will and determination to achieve the targets agreed upon. In this regard, we call upon the international community to increase the flows of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment, to establish a fairer world trade system and for total debt cancellation of poor countries. In this context, we welcome the establishment of timetables by developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7% of gross national product for ODA by no later than 2015. We are also encouraged by the recent decision taken by G8 countries, leading to the duplication of development aid to Africa and for debt relief of the highly indebted poor countries, including Mozambique.

The adoption of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and its African Peer Review Mechanism should, Mr. President, also be seen in the context of our commitment with the MDGs. At the core of NEPAD are peace and security, good governance, democracy and respect for human rights. Above all, NEPAD is a call for help from someone who is not idling by, who is aware of and is taking responsibility for the development of the Continent.

Mr. President,

The celebration of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations offers us an opportunity to evoke the successes of our international institution over the last six decades. Indeed, since its inception, the United Nations has been able to fulfill the basic principles entrenched in its Charter.

In this regard, we would like to highlight the role of the United Nations in the struggle for de-colonization by reaffirming the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination and independence. As a result, almost all nations of the world are here represented as sovereign and equal member states and their people are now able to exercise and enjoy their social, economic and political rights. At the same time, the United Nations was a deterrent factor to confrontation and intolerance hence contributing decisively to the enhancement of multilateralism as a driving force in all efforts to address global challenges before us.

Building on those past successes we should steadily and collectively advance the ongoing efforts towards strengthening its capacity to face the challenges posed by the 21st Century.

This Summit is an important opportunity for us to renew our commitments to the values and principles of international relations such as freedom for all men and women, equality among nations to benefit from development, international solidarity in managing global challenges, tolerance in the relations among all human beings, respect and protection of the environment.

Advancing the priorities set forth by the UN agenda for peace and development calls for the revitalization of the UN as a whole, from the main organs - the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) - to the operational activities agencies, funds and programmes, including the Bretton Woods institutions. We, therefore, commend the Secretary General's efforts in making the Secretariat more efficient and an important component for the success of the process of reforms and the implementation of the international agenda.

The reform of the Security Council should be comprehensive so as to ensure its fair and equitable representation thus enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness. In this context, the revision of its working methods is crucial to improve the accountability to the membership, and increase the transparency of its work.

As we strive for global security and a world free from fear, we should not lose sight of other priorities, particularly those pertaining to the development agenda.

Mr. President,

As a result of successful elections in Mozambique, we have been bestowed with the responsibility of succeeding Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, a statesman, who interacted a great deal with, most of you. During his tenure of office, we witnessed the support and encouragement you provided him and the People of Mozambique with. As we take the floor for the first time in this August Assembly we would like to express our hope that Mozambique will continue to count on your support and

encouragement for a successful implementation of our Five-Year Programme. This programme focus on reducing poverty through the promotion of rapid, comprehensive and sustained economic growth, deepening of an enabling environment for investment and development of national entrepreneurship, as well as bold actions in education, health, water and sanitation and rural development.

We have made some progress. Indeed, the proportion of the population living below the poverty line fell from 69% in 1997 (Z1% rural and 62% urban) to 54% in 2003 (55% rural and 52% urban). This reduction means that Mozambique has already met and exceeded its target of reducing the proportion of population living in poverty to 60% by 2005, as set in the Government's Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty 2001-2005 (PARRA),

Above all, the decline in poverty has been accompanied by improvements on:

Mortality rates - between 1997 and 2003, under-five mortality rates decreased by around 18%, while infant mortality rates decreased by around 15%;

Immunization coverage - the percentage of one year-old children fully immunized against DPT, tuberculosis, polio and measles improved markedly from 47% in 1997 to 63% in 2003.

Access to primary education - remarkable progress has been made in increasing Gross and Net Enrolment Rates in the lower education primary level (EP1), which respectively rose between

1997 and 2003 from 75% to 113%, and 44% to 69%. The school network also witnessed a substantial expansion, with the number of EP1 schools rising from 6,114 in 1998 to 8,077 in 2003. Although completion rates in EP 1 increased from 22% in 1997 to 40% in 2003, it will be difficult to achieve the Goal of full access to primary education by 2015, unless substantial human and financial resources are invested in the system. Similarly, access to education among women improved substantially over time. While in 2003 more than 60% of women aged 35 years and older never went to school compared to 26% of men, the percentages for the age group 11- 14 years was only 15% for girls compared to 10% for boys.

Levels of illiteracy - among the population aged 15 years and above, the illiteracy rate decreased from 61% in 1997 to 54% in 2003. However, more than half of Mozambican adults are illiterate today, with serious gender disparities.

Despite this tangible progress, the road remains long. Although the total external debt has been reduced to a sustainable level, it remains high at 75% of GDP. Mozambique relies heavily on foreign resources including aid, which amounts to about 12% of GDP, compared to 6-8% for the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa. Data available for the year 2000 show that donor funding accounted for 46% of all spending on education, 70% in health, and 75% in infrastructure (roads and water).

We hope that the momentum created by the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly and by the proposals of the Secretary General will give a new impetus to our commitment to make

the world a better place for all humanity. It is an imperative that we all translate our political commitment into concrete actions.

We would like to conclude our remarks by reiterating the pledge of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique to continue its efforts towards the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

Thank you!