



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY PAUL KAGAME PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FRIDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2010

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- ‡ Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly;
- ‡ Excellencies Heads of State and Government;
- ‡ Distinguished Delegates;
- ‡ Ladies and Gentlemen;

At this 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, it is right that we re-examine the role of the United Nations in global governance, as we strive to help it adapt as fast as our changing times, so that it serves all its members equally.

In my understanding, global governance recognises the inevitable and welcome interconnectedness of nations, the unique circumstances and contributions of each, and the principle of mutual respect. I say welcome because, as we have seen, major threats of global scale like the financial crisis, climate change, terrorism, poverty and other challenges to world peace need the concerted efforts of all nations if they are to be addressed effectively.

The just concluded MDG Summit has provided us another opportunity to assess the role of the UN, measure the progress we have made and consider the hurdles that remain in meeting the various goals we set ourselves.

It is evident that the UN is uniquely placed to play a crucial role in mobilising and galvanising all nations for the common good, driving forward our collective initiatives, and coordinating actions that foster the social and

economic development of all.

But the United Nations is a sum total of member states and it can only be as good as the constituent members want it to be. If there was common understanding and shared values among all member states, the United Nations would deliver more efficiently on its mandate.

But it has become clear that the UN has evolved into a two-tier organisation, reflecting a world that seems to be divided into two major categories: one with inherent laudable values, rights and liberties, and another that needs to be taught and coached on these values.

My country and many in the developing world seem to fall in that second category. Not only marginalised and disenfranchised; we are also considered chronic violators of our own human rights. The implication is that the UN holds a certain standard for some countries, and another for others – especially on international issues where every single member should be treated equally under the law.

In my view, a debate between these two categories urgently needs to take place within the United Nations membership so as to regain the noble founding ideals of the organisation. No entity is better placed than our common United Nations to bring equality and respect, despite disparities in economic status.

The same situation pertains in the realm of international justice and the rule

of law. Rwanda subscribes to the principle that everyone and every state is accountable to laws and that the rule of law should govern us all. But these laws must truly be equally enforced and independently adjudicated.

Mr President;

Distinguished Delegates;

Reaffirming the role of the UN in global governance presupposes strengthening and reforming it to make it more effective and efficient in its response to global challenges. The impetus to reform our global governance structures, however, is to ensure that they are equipped to deal with those challenges and secure a brighter future for all the citizens of the world.

When there are no avenues to appeal international rulings, when there is an accountability deficit in key global institutions and when ordinary citizens feel that the UN cannot deal adequately with the issues affecting their daily lives, the UN cannot be seen as credible, relevant and democratic. We should make sure that this organisation does not become a tool for the powerful to protect their interests and enhance their influence or use it in subjugating others.

Rwanda believes in multilateralism and understands that global challenges can only be effectively resolved through international cooperation. The UN must continue to be at the centre of this agenda and play its role without bias

or prejudice.

As we, in Rwanda, continue to rebuild our country, we have become acutely aware of the need for lasting peace and security in our region – and have worked hard to achieve it. We know that stability is the key prerequisite for our development, improved livelihoods of our citizens and our neighbours, and we have unreservedly committed ourselves to its attainment.

We will continue to work in partnership with our neighbours, international and regional organisations and the African Union to ensure that peace and security prevail and that Africa fully realises its potential.

Lastly, let me say that each of our countries, separately and collectively, have a duty to the entire world's people, especially the most vulnerable.

I thank you for your kind attention.