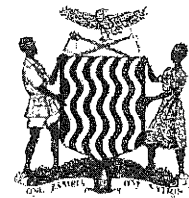


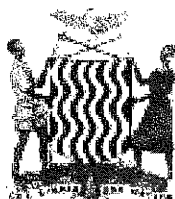


REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



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SPEECH

**DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR L. MUNGOMA
PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND
LEADER OF THE ZAMBIAN DELEGATION
AT THE 66TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York

27th September, 2011

- Your Excellency, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly;
- Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary- General of the United Nations;
- Distinguished Representatives and Heads of Delegations;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr President,

I wish in the first instance to extend my sincere congratulations to you on your election as President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly. In similar vein, I thank His Excellency Joseph Deiss for his leadership of the 65th session.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr Ban Ki-Moon on his re-election as Secretary General of the United Nations.

I further seize the opportunity to extend a warm and hearty welcome to the Republic of South Sudan to the community of nations following its independence on 9th July this year. We commend both the Governments of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan for the smooth transition during the handover and takeover of power. Zambia encourages the two countries to resolve the outstanding issues between them amicably and work towards maintaining peaceful relations as this is the only way to achieve economic and social development of the countries.

Mr President,

The theme for the 66th Session of the General Assembly, “the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means” is indeed a very pertinent one considering the various conflicts across the globe which threaten international peace and security. The recent upheavals in North-Africa and the Middle East not only presented a new dimension to the politics in that region, but also highlighted the need for mediation to avert the outbreak of fighting.

My delegation wishes to underscore the need for the International Community to resolve the conflicts on the African Continent, including the situation in Libya, within the frameworks established by the African Union. We believe that local solutions have a higher prospect of being respected and accepted by all parties to the conflict.

In this regard, Zambia aligns itself with the mediation efforts put in place by the African Union and supports the Roadmap for the peaceful resolution to the crisis in Libya as endorsed by the African Union Heads of State and Government at their 17th Summit held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea in June this year.

With regard to Libya, Zambia shares the relief of the Libyan people in ridding themselves of a leader who committed egregious atrocities against his own people. We must, however, express serious concern about new atrocities being committed against black people in that country – both the citizens and migrants from other African countries.

We call on this august body to send a strong message that not only will it pursue perpetrators of these atrocities as vigorously as it did Gaddafi, but it undertakes to investigate all allegations thoroughly. It would be tragic if, in the euphoria of celebrating the ousting of Gaddafi, the UN turns a blind eye to atrocities still being committed.

Mr. President,

The Palestinian – Israeli conflict continues to be a major concern to international peace and security. We understand the frustrations of the Palestinian people over the long negotiations which have completely stalled in recent years. In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that Zambia recognises the Palestinian State, with pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its Capital. In similar vein, Zambia recognises the State of Israel and its right to live in peace with its Palestinian neighbour.

Mr President,

The drought situation in the Horn of Africa presents a humanitarian emergency that threatens the lives of 12 million people. While erratic rainfall in past years is the main cause of the drought, the prevalent political instability and violence in Somalia has hampered that country's ability to effectively respond to such crisis. Zambia has pledged to donate several metric tonnes in various food items and cash from the Government and private sector. The need to address the political instability and violence in Somalia continues to be urgent. We, therefore, call upon the United Nations to implement the recommendations of the Special Representative of the Secretary General to Somalia, in which he called for establishment for UN Peacekeeping Mission there.

Mr President,

Exactly one week ago, on 20th September, general elections took place in my country. On Friday, three days later, the fifth and newest President of the Country, Mr. Michael Chilufya Sata, was inaugurated. The incumbent graciously conceded and handed power. It was smooth and peaceful. It was a triumph of democracy. Zambia strongly believes in the rule of law and is concerned at trends towards unconstitutional changes of government – trends that, in some cases, receive the active support of powerful countries in the international community.

Mr President,

The political stability that Zambia has and continues to enjoy has had a positive impact on the economic development of the country. Over the past decade real GDP growth has averaged 5.4 percent. Whilst this growth has reflected effective macroeconomic management and good copper prices, it has been built on the foundation of Zambia's stable political environment and improved record of governance. In 2011, we expect to consolidate this strong performance with growth now projected to be above 7 percent, second only to the projected growth rates of 9.2 percent for developing Asia and significantly above the projected 5.5 percent growth rate for Sub-Saharan Africa.

Mr President,

These economic trends notwithstanding, Zambia still faces the challenge of translating her economic growth into the significant reduction in poverty and a general improvement in the living standards of its citizenry. It is our intention that the benefits of economic growth are broadly shared by the population at large. We hope to achieve this by continuing to strengthen our Governance institutions, maintaining peace and stability, ensuring that we remain open to the opportunities that global trade, and the exchange of ideas and experiences, offer to a developing economy.

Mr. President,

The country's economic development agenda is guided by the National Vision, in which Zambia aspires to be a prosperous middle income country by 2030. This national agenda has been operationalised through the five year national development plan. Currently the country is operating under its Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP) under the theme "Sustained economic growth and poverty reduction." With these achievements, Zambia is on course to achieve five of the eight targets of the Millennium Development Goals by 2011.

Mr. President,

In four years the MDG target date will be upon us. While Zambia has made notable progress towards achieving the 2015 MDG targets particularly in increased access to education, reduced maternal, infant and under five mortality rates and child nutrition, these achievements risk being reversed and pushing the country off track due to the multi-faceted negative impacts of the world economic recession, unfulfilled commitments and ever diminishing levels of financial assistance from cooperating partners. Under the circumstances, many developing countries are unlikely to meet the MDG targets. It is, therefore, important that not only should every effort be made to assist countries stay on track, but it is also time to start planning for a post – 2015 MDG framework.

Mr. President,

Beyond the challenges posed by infectious diseases, Zambia is also affected by the emerging global trend of Non-Communicable diseases. The socio-demographic and technological transition that goes with urbanization and industrialization has resulted in an increase in non-communicable diseases in our country. I would, therefore, like to commend you for hosting the high level plenary meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases. My delegation nevertheless, is cautious that while focusing on Non-Communicable Diseases, resources meant for infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB should be secured so that the gains already achieved in these areas are not lost.

Mr. President,

Allow me to express Zambia's gratitude to the Secretary General of the United Nations for organizing the high-level meeting on combating desertification on 20th September 2011. There is no doubt that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is the least supported of the three (3) Rio Conventions, the others being the Climate Change Convention and the Biodiversity Convention. It is in this light that the convening of the high-level meeting, as a means of raising awareness of desertification, land degradation and drought at high level, is most welcome. There is clearly need for concerted efforts among all member states to raise the profile of the Desertification Convention to the level of the other two.

Mr. President,

Zambia views desertification and land degradation as a major economic, social and environmental problem that requires immediate attention. It is in this regard that my country's Sixth National Development Plan for 2011 to 2015, has endeavoured to mainstream environmental management in general and sustainable land management in particular. The challenge now is for Zambia to mobilize adequate and predictable financial resources to implement the programmes contained in this Plan.

The mobilization of resources for implementation of programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought is a common obligation of all member states, including those unaffected by desertification as spelt out in the Convention, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, among others. We, therefore, call for the judicious implementation of the outcome of the recently held high-level meeting on desertification and land degradation. We also call upon all states to ensure that adequate financial resources are available for programmers to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

Mr. President,

Turning to the topical subject of climate change, whose adverse effects is responsible for exacerbating desertification, land degradation and drought, the need to put in place a new and dynamic international regime for climate change has never been so urgent. The adverse effects of climate change are disproportionately being borne by poor countries such as my own. The effects of Climate change are real and are already affecting our agriculture, water, health, tourism and infrastructure to mention but some of the sectors. Yet as we have repeatedly said, the rich countries are responsible for the historic build-up of the greenhouse gases in our atmosphere – the problem that has brought about global warming and climate change. Therefore, the developed world should show leadership when it comes to agreeing on a new international regime on climate change.

Mr. President,

Zambia is looking forward to the forthcoming climate change talks to be held in Durban, South Africa in December of this year. We are confident that these climate change talks will build on the positive outcome from the last talks held in Cancun, Mexico in December last year. Africa, hosting such talks for the first time, is determined to ensure a successful outcome. Time is running out and we can no longer afford the luxury of inconclusive talks each year. We call upon all parties to commit themselves to making progress and ensuring that agreement is reached on all outstanding issues so as to pave the way for a new climate change regime. We also call for the immediate operationalisation of all the Funds so far established under the Climate Change Convention, thereby, making the financial resources accessible to countries in need.

Mr President,

The High Level meeting to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Durban Conference and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was a timely reminder to all nations to continue promoting the rights of all people regardless of race or creed as equal citizens of the World. Zambia recommits herself to the just cause of fighting against any form of racism or racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Mr. President,

With the year 2012 very much in sight, Zambia hopes for a successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty. A strong and robust Arms Trade Treaty will help foster regional and international peace and security. Zambia also supports an Arms Trade Treaty that encompasses all conventional weapons, including Small Arms and Light Weapons and their ammunition, components of weapons, dual use equipment with a military end-use and arms production equipment and technology. Further, Zambia advocates for an Arms Trade Treaty that has a broad scope that includes landmines and other conventional weapons already covered by international weapon specific agreements and technical support.

Mr President,

Last Friday the President of Sierra Leone, in his capacity as Coordinator of the Committee of Ten African Heads of State on the Reform of the Security Council, reminded this august body of the need to hasten negotiations on this important issue. Zambia aligns itself with that statement and the sentiment.

It is a fact that Africa is now the largest of the regions of the UN with 54 members, the same as Asia. It is also a fact that three-quarters of the agenda of the Security Council

are African issues. Unfortunately, it is also a fact that Africa is the only Continent with no representation in the permanent category of the Security Council. In addition, Africa is under-represented in the non-permanent members category.

Africa's request for two permanent seats – with all the rights and obligations of current members – and two additional non-permanent seats is a matter of justice and the right to have an equal say in decision – making on issues that concern our Continent. It is also a matter of democracy. Above all, it is about the dignity of a people, the dignity of a Continent.

I thank you for your attention.