



Republic of Cape Verde

Permanent Mission of Cape Verde to the United Nations

INTERVENTION

of

**H.E. Mr. Jorge Carlos Almeida da Fonseca, President of the Republic of
Cape Verde**

**In the occasion of the "Adjustment or settlement of international disputes or
situations by peaceful means"**

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Speech by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Cape Verde, Dr. Jorge Carlos Fonseca, at the 67th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

New York, 27th September 2012

Excellencies, Mrs. and Mr. Heads of States and Government,

Mr. Vuk Jeremic, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Mrs. and Mr. Heads of Delegation,

I convey my greetings to the President of the General Assembly, whom I congratulate for his election and I express my wishes for success in his mandate.

I equally convey my greetings to the former President of the General Assembly from the State of Qatar, Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for the excellent work he accomplished during his mandate.

Allow me to also express words of appreciation to the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, for the competent manner in which he has been managing the destiny of our Organization, and reaffirm our trust in his leadership, mainly at a particularly difficult time, such as this moment that this Assembly is gathered. I am referring to one of the worst financial crises that the world has known, with repercussions in the economic, social, political, food, energy, environmental, and migration sectors, not forgetting yet, the terrible threats to peace and security that come from all corners of the world.

As a small island state, with shortage of resources and with only thirty seven years of independence, Cape Verde is proud to be a democratic country and based on the Rule of Law, built with suffering and the determination of Cape Verdeans within and outside the country.

Notwithstanding the fact that my country faces enormous difficulties in ensuring its own existence and that to overcome them will need international solidarity. I believe that it can, although modestly, contribute towards finding solutions for important problems that threatens the troubled world of our times.

Apart from the political stability that has characterized us and of the building up, as well as the consolidation of a democratic system, the Cape Verdean nation that preceded the creation of the State, can be considered an example of pacific co-existence between people originally from different countries, with different creeds which incorporated into an original mixed culture, open to the world and to the exchange of values.

Mr. President,

The option of a policy for peace, dialogue and understanding in the resolution of conflicts more than the manifestation and the assumption of such values, is the origin of the way of being and the living of the Cape Verdeans, of a culture of tolerance that has allowed for, throughout decades of its history, that such values and principles have shaped the country's policies.

Besides the fact that our modest political contribution has been towards attaining political results, namely those achieved within the framework of Southern Africa's conflicts and which resulted in the end of Apartheid, the independence of Namibia and peace in Angola, bearing in mind that perhaps the biggest contribution that we have been providing is the way of living as a People and as a Culture.

In a day to day life, we have been demonstrating that tolerance is possible; the exchange of values is a reality, even in adverse conditions.

It is this background that has allowed different Governments and Heads of States to maintain the same way of thinking in managing the foreign policy of Cape Verde, opting for prioritizing the defense of a policy of peace and justice and, the peaceful co-existence among people. We could almost say that our foreign policy has been the expression, at least, the translation, of our culture, our ideology.

This reality that also guides me and which I have been striving to further pursue, can be, I believe, an important contribution of Cape Verde to my Continent and, perhaps, to other places in the world.

Mr. President,

On September 25th, the Constitution of the Republic of Cape Verde completed twenty years of its existence, what to some extent is an indicator of stability that we enjoy in our country and, that has been allowing for presidential, legislative and municipal elections to take place, under alternate policies within highest levels of normalcy.

For a joyous coincidence, that critical date for my country coincides with the realization of the 67th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, exponent of the Democracy at a planetary level, in the process of renovation and, therefore, I am very grateful to share this achievement with this venerable Assembly.

The Magna Law stipulates that our judicial order receives, with precedence, in our internal order, the norms of common international law and that of the conventional law, lawfully approved and ratified.

This aspect testifies, in an eloquent way, the great importance that we place to institutions such as the United Nations and our option for principles that guide them, but we are aware that if these and other principles that are embedded in the Constitution, namely those that

refer to the respect for human rights, do not percolate our culture, the Constitution will not be fulfilled in its entirety.

Therefore, both within the country and in the Diaspora we have been urging all Cape Verdeans to further interiorize the Constitution, a critical step to ensure its progressive and full realization.

Mr. President,

Despite the serious questions that prevail in the world and the vulnerabilities that the Cape Verdean economy faces, with direct impact in the living conditions of the majority of the people, I must say, without false modesty, that I am proud of the trajectory followed by my country since independence to these days. At that time our per capita GDP was 190 USD and today it has increased to 3295 USD. Several social indicators accompanied this positive evolution and, today we are in a position to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In fact, I can state that the human development, economic and financial rates registered in the bi-annual 2011/2012, had positive reviews from major international financial institutions.

With an economy based on services, which in 2010 accounted for 80% of the GDP, a market with exiguous dimensions and an agriculture that fights against desertification and lack of rain, we cannot ignore the great vulnerabilities that we face and, therefore, we know that we cannot be dazzled by the fact that we graduated to a medium-income developed country.

On the contrary, we cannot lose sight of the fact that our economy is still very dependent, that it cannot absorb a significant part of its labor, with all the social consequences that stem from this. Thus, we have to continue to rely on international solidarity.

Naturally, we shall continue to rely on the efficient and rational use of our meager resources, and develop, even more effectively, efforts

towards the fight against poverty, social exclusion and unemployment, that in 2010 achieved a general rate of 21% and 50% among the youth.

The constraints at the energy, water and sanitation levels will have to continue to deserve our duly attention, so that, at the building up of key infrastructure, we manage to create necessary conditions for the sustainable growth of our economy.

Mr. President,

One of the noticeable characteristics of our world is the even more increased interdependency of all areas. If the economy is, at times, mentioned often, due to the fact that it conditions the rest, the interdependency extends to the environmental, health, security, political and cultural sectors, in fact, to almost all the areas of human activity.

Thus, it is fundamental, for us, the permanent monitoring of aspects more relevant of these complex relations with the objective of knowing the dominant tendencies, that may condition our developmental process but also for us to be in a position, even modestly, to contribute towards the solution of problems that torment the people and the countries in various spheres.

Although social and political stability are essential aspects of our society, we cannot ignore the fact that in my continent, Africa, this has not been one of the underlying characteristics due to internal reasons and due to other reasons that, to some extent are alien to the continent.

I express my profound concern regarding the current and exceptional economic and financial crisis worldwide, which continues to penalize, in a dramatic way, Governments and defenseless populations of the African Continent, whom are already suffering from hunger, the AIDS pandemic associated to other endemic diseases and by the outflow of hundreds of thousands of displaced people as well as by the overwhelming environmental degradation which the continent has been

a victim. Despite the fact that it has been the Continent that least contributed for that imbalance, Africa is the one that suffers greatly from its consequences.

These crisis also involves the security, not only due to regional conflicts, but equally, due to the universal dimension that terrorism has assumed and that it has affected greater part of our Continent with impact on drug trafficking and that of human beings, piracy at sea, religious intolerance, problems that are based on the political, social and military instability prevailing in many of our countries, fertile territory for its establishment and development. The recent cases of Mali, Guinea-Bissau, and others such as Sudan, Somalia, The Democratic Republic of the Congo and some countries of the Maghreb, illustrates well the situation.

The International Community has all the interest in decisively focus itself in the fight for the eradication of such problems.

Despite such constraints, it is of recognition that the new wave of African leaders has been doing a lot towards the Continent's progress. Therefore, the International Community must help these countries to find appropriate solutions to situations it faces without interference, based on interests of others that are not of our people.

It is clear that a lot still remain to be done.

In our understanding, and as I alluded to in another occasion, what has not been lacking in Africa, Mr. President, are recipes, declarations, recommendations, programs, projects, within an analysis and a perspective that are trespassed by political, institutional, social and cultural factors that, sometimes, are conditioned in a web, that suggest a vicious cycle; there is no real development because there is no peace; democracy is not deeply rooted because it contradicts with cultures and moral traditions; there is no peace because contexts of intolerance and of social exclusion that take away from its citizens the possibility of building a free, just, democratic and pluralistic society, thus

strengthening, sometimes, the proliferation of armed conflicts and other social problems.

Africa needs, Ladies and Gentlemen, a new line of thought, that does not reject the universal values of democracy, in the contrary, uses these to enrich its own process of development within a dialectic relation between modernity and tradition; between freedom and temptations of its conditioning; between the demands of the economic development and the fight against the exclusion and social inequality; between realism and preconceived notions.

Africa needs to re-conquer its self-confidence.

Africa needs yet, Mr. President, to strengthen the ties between the United Nations and the African Union, a true partnership for development.

It is time, Mr. President, to decide on global negotiations, undertaken on the basis of fair and equal rules and with ethics, within the scope of global trade or climate change, according to the countries in the South in general, and of my Continent in particular, which re-vindicate in other forums, namely within the scope of the World Trade Organization, FAO and UNFCCC.

We appeal, for decisions on concrete measures that will result in the decision taken within the framework of this Organization, in terms of development such as, those related to the cancelling of the external debt of developing countries, particularly Small Island Developing States, because we are certain that such decision would represent a stimulus for all these countries, with the objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in 2015.

Mr. President,

In 2009, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, affirmed at Princeton University, that the UN needs “a new vision, a new paradigm, a new multilateralism” , which would allow for the “assurance of world

economic and financial stability, launch an offensive against poverty, reestablish peace, respond to climate changes, improve health in world, fight against terrorism and guarantee disarmament and non-proliferation”.

Last June 2012, at the closing ceremony of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development it have been stated and I quote: “Rio+20” showed that multilateralism is an irreplaceable instrument of global expression of democracy. We reaffirm that these are the legitimate route to develop solutions for the problems that affect the entire humanity.”

I share and applaud such statements.

Mr. President,

Since the end of the cold war, the world evolved tremendously. The multilateral system currently in force needs to align itself with the new challenges. And for the UN to continue to be an efficient and vital instrument for the International Community, in this new era of multilateral relations, the institution would have to open, innovate, listen to other voices and accept the new political, economic and social realities created and imposed by the globalization process in which the world got involved.

The reform of the United Nations Security Council, institution that has, less and less, been responding to the challenges of the contemporary world, it is an objective that has long been pursued, however, without reaching yet an agreement for its materialization.

In this particular issue, Cape Verde supports the position taken by the African Union that recommends the reform of the Security Council, with the aim to correct the unjust situation with the African Continent, without the right yet, of at least a Permanent seat in the above-mentioned Council despite the fact that it meets all the requirements for such.

I end, Mr. President, with the conviction that Africa can also give its valuable contribution for the development of a better world. A world without war, where peace is not just a theoretical concept. A world with more freedom, with more justice and more security. In other words, a world with more fraternity and prosperity, capable of effectively providing well-being to all its citizens.

I thank you, greatly for your attention.