



REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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

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

Excellencies, the Heads of State and Government

Honorable Ambassadors

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. President,

First allow me to congratulate Your Excellency for your election as President of the 67th Ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly and to wish that your mandate be crowned with success. I assure you of our country's full cooperation during this noble mission that has been entrusted to you.

I further would like to congratulate Mr. **Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser**, President of the 66th Session of the UNGA for a job well done.

Mr. President,

I take this distinguished podium with a sense of profound recognition and gratefulness as Interim President of the Republic, as the legitimate President of our country, to unequivocally demonstrate our organization's intolerance toward unconstitutional changes to democratically bestowed powers.

The proposed theme for this Session of the United Nations General Assembly – “peaceful resolution of international disputes” – is of utmost importance in light of the situation in today's world and the current crisis in Guinea-Bissau.

Indeed, last April 12, 2012, our country again faced a coup d'état event that altered the constitutional order. This took place after we held the first round of early presidential elections, which the international community deemed free, fair, and transparent.

I am heartened by the certainty that I legitimately speak on behalf of the people of Guinea-Bissau, the vast majority of which recognizes me as their legal representative under our Constitution. I recall when I, as the elected President of the National People's Assembly and pursuant to our Constitution, took office as Interim President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau upon the death of President Malam Bacai Sanhá.

We felt particularly frustrated with the strong disagreements among the various international organizations in resolving the crisis that ensued in Guinea-Bissau. Based on the principle of subsidiarity delegated by the African Union, we recognized the leadership of ECOWAS in mediating the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. However, we are hard-pressed in understanding how this is in contradiction with safeguarding the values of Democracy and Rule of Law, as well as preserving the respect and dignity of our sub-regional organization. We regret the insistence of ECOWAS in not complying with International Community standards to the extent of ignoring a specific Security Council resolution and driving the country to total isolation, with grave social and humanitarian consequences for our people. Indeed, how and in what manner ECOWAS has chosen to restore constitutional legality clearly demonstrate their intention not only of accepting but also rewarding the coup d'état, which flagrantly contradicts the principle of zero tolerance toward gaining power through unconstitutional means, as stated in their own protocol on democracy and good governance.

Mr. President,

The rules and principles of democracy and the rule of law are objective and universally recognized by the international community, and must drive all political actions that emanate from the organizations of which we are sovereign members. Furthermore, they must never be construed in a subjective or equivocal manner. In this regard, we welcome the clear positions taken by the CPLP, European Union, African Union, International Organization of La Francophonie and United Nations, which were able to genuinely interpret said principles, and renew our hope that ECOWAS will reconsider their positions and align themselves with these important partners.

We urge the United Nations to assume their role in coordinating this process, as recommended by Security Council Resolution 2048 and the Declaration of the President of the Security Council on July 30, 2012, in order to include all partner organizations in the search for a balanced and fair solution that responds to the aspirations of the people of Guinea-Bissau. To this end, we reiterate our appeal to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, that he call a high-level meeting to review the situation in Guinea-Bissau for the purpose of formulating a global and integrated strategy and establishing a roadmap with concrete steps leading to the full reestablishment of constitutional order in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

On the other hand, no transition process seems feasible in Guinea-Bissau if it does not include the PAIGC, the party that won the most recent legislative elections and governed the country until the coup d'état. We must elect a new 1st Vice President of the National People's Assembly in order to ensure the current Presidency of parliament and form a new government led by a Prime Minister appointed by the PAIGC. This could be a first step of a minimally acceptable solution, which could bring the country back from the extreme isolation to which it has been subjected since the tragic events of April 12th.

It also seems extremely important, if not crucial, for a lasting solution for the crisis in our country, that the ECOWAS Force stationed in Guinea-Bissau be transformed into a Multinational or International Force with an express mandate from the United Nations, and that it include units from other CPLP countries in order to ensure the general safety of all political leaders and citizens of Guinea-Bissau, as well as the free exercise of their civil and political rights.

To this end, I would like to declare before this great Assembly that I am totally available to cooperate in the search for a common solution that may bring peace, stability, and development to Guinea-Bissau and allow our people to exercise their legitimate right to choose their leaders.

Mr. President,

Impunity in Guinea-Bissau has been of great concern to the international community and the people of Guinea-Bissau in the last 14 years, as well as a major source of political and military instability in our country. Therefore we urge the international community to increase their support for and involvement in pursuing the inquiries into the various political assassinations that have occurred in our country, so that the perpetrators of these hideous crimes may be identified and prosecuted under the law, by an international ad-hoc, independent, and credible international tribunal.

Indeed, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate, before this great Assembly, the accusations that we have previously made before the UN Security Council, regarding the lack of basic freedoms and rights for the citizens of Guinea-Bissau. Since the tragic events of April 12, the citizens and democratic political parties in Guinea-Bissau have been prohibited from engaging in peaceful demonstrations and expressing their opinions freely.

There is no democracy if citizens and political parties cannot freely exercise their basic rights and freedoms. Therefore this absurd situation must urgently come to an end.

Mr. President,

I wish to note our opposition to the continued blockade of Cuba and join the many who demand the immediate lift of the embargo. I also wish to reaffirm our commitment to the responsibility that we all must share with respect to global environmental balance, and, as such, to congratulate ourselves for the results achieved during the recent Rio+20 world conference.

In closing, Mr. President, allow me to address my fellow countrymen and women in Guinea-Bissau, who are suffering directly with the current situation, as well as our citizens in other countries, to ask for their courage and determination in preventing Guinea-Bissau from slipping back to the status of a failed State, and for their continued efforts, hand in hand and in harmony, to build a better Guinea-Bissau for all.

I salute and thank you all on behalf of all the people of Guinea-Bissau.

OUR BEST WISHES TO ALL!