



**SPEECH BY H.E PAUL KAGAME, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA, TO THE 67TH
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- **President of the General Assembly;**
- **Excellencies Heads of State and Government;**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is timely that we meet here over the next few days to seek ways and means to prevent and overall manage conflicts.

While it may seem that conflict is perennial and its forms increasingly destructive, we have the urgent task of seeking more effective ways to prevent, manage and solve it. The loss we witness or experience on a daily basis – in terms of human life and devastation – is unacceptable. Additionally, at a time when wide scale poverty robs too many people of realizing their full potential in life, conflict also detracts us from development.

We might ask ourselves why, after decades of efforts to rein in conflict on a global scale and foster multi-lateral cooperation for sustainable peace, the results are still not what they should be. The reasons for this are several and multi-faceted namely:

One, we must appreciate that many conflicts are caused when people are, or feel excluded from full participation in the affairs of their country, particularly around issues that affect their everyday lives. Even a cursory look at the conflict hot-spots around the world shows us the dangerous consequences of a disenfranchised and despondent citizenry. Durable solutions can only come from an inclusive approach to both politics and development.

Secondly, deep analysis of specific political and cultural contexts of any given conflict is key to lasting solutions. Too often, the inclination is to parachute into a situation with ready-made answers based on superficial examination of the conflict's dynamics, doing considerably more harm than good, despite the intentions. There is no one-size-fits-all remedy; these issues are complex and should be approached as such for the best possible outcome.

Thirdly, the inter-linkages between conflict and development are often over-looked; if we are looking for peaceful ways to resolve and prevent conflicts, then

promoting development tops the list. The stakes are high – a civil conflict costs the average developing country about 30 years of GDP growth and violence can easily spill over borders threatening hard-won progress.

Since security and development cannot be achieved without each other, we all have to play our roles – from the average citizen, to government leaders, to global institutions like the UN – to find inclusive solutions for lasting peace and prosperity.

And finally, it is increasingly obvious that local or regional initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts yield more positive results because those involved have a deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Their proximity to the conflict makes them more invested in a comprehensive resolution, and enables the necessary support for whatever process is agreed upon. We need to see these initiatives strengthened. We should be highlighting root causes as we address conflicts.

‡ Mr President;

In the fifty years of our independence and membership of the United Nations, Rwanda has lived through conflicts. Our country was destroyed by political exclusion and subsequent Genocide.

Over the last 18 years, we have been able to rebuild the country through policies that include all citizens in governance processes, and by applying home-grown conflict resolution and development mechanisms.

While our experience with the United Nations since becoming a member has been a mixed one, it has taken on a positive trajectory in recent years and we are optimistic that it will remain so.

The history of how conflicts have been handled in Rwanda, and indeed in our region, however, shows that improvement is needed. It is our obligation to point this out – not to be critical – but because we subscribe to the ideals and principles on which the United Nations was founded. We can and should do better.

Rwanda remains committed to a more effective United Nations, particularly with respect to the work towards a more peaceful, just and equitable world. We shall continue to contribute towards various programmes for development and peace, from our role in promoting the Millennium Development Goals and supporting the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, to our troops participating in peace keeping missions. We hope to contribute and participate even more going forward.

Let me conclude by saying that although the challenge to better prevent and resolve conflict may seem daunting, it remains ours to take on. When we see leaders work with the people in an inclusive manner, when development can proceed unhindered by conflict, when regional groupings take greater responsibility in tackling their own issues, and when international cooperation takes place in a spirit of true partnership – I believe the results will speak for themselves, and billions of lives across the globe will improve. Ultimately, this is what we all should work towards.

Thank you.