



SAO TOMÉ AND PRINCIPE

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

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PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 67th SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 28th September 2012

Mr. President of the General Assembly,

Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations,

Ladies and Gentlemen Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Excellencies,

First of all, on behalf of the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, and in my own name, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Vuk Jeremic for his election as President of the sixty-seventh (67th) Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I am convinced that his experience as Chief of Diplomacy of the Republic of Serbia will be a most positive contribution to strengthening the affirmation of the principles of the United Nations Charter for world security and peace, and I hope that he will lead the work of this session with clarity and balance.

The Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe also wishes to express its great appreciation for the work of the Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, for his role in expanding our organization and encouraging it to continue its efforts to achieve the objectives of world peace and security.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Nassir Abdulaziz Al Nasser for his highly positive contribution during the sixty-sixth (66th) Session.

Mr. President,

Delegates,

As it did during the debates of the sixty-sixth (66th) Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe reiterates its hope that the United Nations will play a key role in mediating international conflicts.

Unfortunately, today we continue to look on with concern as conflicts that could jeopardize international peace and security persist and further exacerbate the deep economic and financial crisis that is devastating the world.

Sadly, our organization continues to suffer from the roadblock that prevent urgent decisions that cannot be postponed from being taken and that undermine this forum's credibility; this sanctions the impunity of the leaders that martyrize their own people, paving the way to more international disorder, despair, and the sentiment of injustice that gives preference to the rule of different treatment between peoples.

We need no further evidence of the urgency for in-depth reforms of our institution, primarily the Security Council, to put an end to the horrific images of children that are symbols of purity and innocence who are killed daily in Syria, to prevent the destruction of the world historic and cultural heritage by gangs of destructive criminals in Mali and in Afghanistan, and to prevent coups d'état or obvious attempts to destabilize States and democratically elected Governments which, in fact, solves nothing and irreparably delays the lengthy process of building democracy and fighting poverty, and generates the cost of the international mobilization of human and financial resources that today are increasingly scarce.

Mr. President,

We must prevent the disintegration of territories and repair the abnormal and degrading situations of peoples who have already suffered from the poverty and exclusion created by the lack of democratic leadership and the effective and democratic Rule of Law.

In the specific case of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, with which São Tomé and Príncipe maintains deeply rooted historic, cultural and linguistic links, the international community should bring to bear both firmness and dedication to find a credible, inclusive and lasting solution so that coups d'état do not recur in this country, and this necessarily requires a reform of the armed forces as well as a strong warning to the political class as a whole to make a steadfast commitment to respect political dialogue and democratic legality. On our side, we will continue to make efforts in cooperation with the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries and other engaged regional and international organizations to guarantee a better future for the people of Guinea-Bissau.

Regarding the occupation of the North of the Republic of Mali by groups of terrorists, and the persistent conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, São Tomé and Príncipe acknowledges and applauds the efforts the international community has made through the United Nations and the African Union to establish peace, security and stability. However, it seems to us that is becoming increasingly essential for us to call on the States that share borders with these two African countries to establish more effective, intelligent and effective ways to cooperate, based on trust and on a matrix of mutually beneficial and realistic economic interests.

Mr. President,

It is common knowledge that the forces of destabilization, despair and terror are fueled and furthered by differences and distrust between States, which in turn paralyzes the international decision-making process.

Mr. President,

Delegates,

However, we must point out positive signs in the trends of a few conflicts on the African Continent, such as the cases of the Republics of Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia.

Consequently, we cannot fail to applaud the recent agreement signed by the Republic of Sudan and South Sudan. Through this framework, the two countries will be able to live in peace and harmony.

We also welcome the positive role of the African Union Peace Mission in the Republic of Somalia (AMISOM), which paves the way to returning the political, economic and social situation of this country and the region to normalcy.

Delegates,

In our opinion, the important recommendations of the Secretary General's report on the matter of the Western Sahara are a positive asset for a permanent resolution.

Mr. President,

Delegates,

The social movements that took place in North Africa in 2011, which had the merit of reinstating the right to freedom and democracy for the different peoples, were popular movements that in many cases were mobilized through social networking and modern instruments of technical communication.

The situations of insecurity and reprehensible acts, as well as the acts recently committed in Benghazi that turned American diplomats into victims, raise the issue of how we live in this new context of circulation and dissemination of images and information at the global level, in a world that we want to be free, open and tolerant, but in which large segments of the people in the world still live in a state of extreme poverty, with no access to education and with the growing conviction that they face exclusion and discrimination.

How do we deal with the offenses committed by people, including even some persons with political public responsibilities such as State leaders who fail to recognize the right of other peoples and States to exist?

In this regard, we would like to take the opportunity that this platform affords us to express to the mourning families of diplomats, journalists, NGO members and soldiers of peace our sincere and deep condolences as well as our unfailing solidarity.

Our ongoing obligation to work to build a better world and to invest in education and the promotion of human and democratic values are fundamental, beginning with having the Member States comply with all United Nations resolutions.

Mr. President,

The massacres in Syria must cease, the integrity and security of the State of Israel must be effective and guaranteed, the Palestinian people must have their State, the embargo against Cuba must end, countries including Iran must have the right to civil nuclear technology and must scrupulously observe the commitments that arise from them, and polluters must be the principal payers. It must be our ambition and not a mere hope to ensure that we return here next year with a lighter agenda of these troublesome issues, many of which are recurring.

We are pleased to observe a few positive signs in the dialogue between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China on the one hand, and on the other hand, the willingness of the Congress of the United States of America and the European Parliament to have Taiwan be a member of international organizations. São Tomé and Príncipe supports these initiatives which will make it possible for the people of Taiwan to make a significant contribution to international issues, without neglecting the necessity for the two parties in the Straits of Formosa to work peacefully to agree to, frame and normalize their relations.

Mr. President,

Delegates,

The high-level debate that preceded this general debate was an excellent opportunity for the Member States to share information on the levels of implementation of democratic reforms and strengthening the Rule of Law in each of them and at the international level.

It is with immense satisfaction that this debate is bringing about significant progress in implementing the democratic and institutional reforms that are capable of strengthening the Rule of Law, internally and internationally.

In this regard, São Tomé and Príncipe congratulates the Republic of Angola for successfully and transparently holding the recent general elections, as this is one more step toward strengthening the democratic process in this sister country of São Tomé and Príncipe.

Delegates,

Our global security, and in particular transnational crimes such as piracy, the trafficking and sale of arms and drugs, is a reason for great concern for São Tomé e Príncipe, a country with a long coastline located in the Gulf of Guinea.

These events are threats that we cannot ignore and that require our utmost interaction with the States with which we share this long coastline and with the other partners and organizations that have experience with these issues and deal with them. This leads us to adopt mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts caused by organized crime, with the purpose of ensuring our collective security and our resolve to strengthen these mechanisms.

In this context, we applaud the important resolutions of the United Nations Security Council on Maritime Peace and Security in the Gulf of Guinea and we reaffirm our unfailing pledge to do everything in conjunction with the other partners to prevent the Gulf of Guinea Region, which we are part of, and which is rich in raw materials that are strategic for the industrialized economies, from becoming a stage for maritime piracy and other scourges that impede economic trade, peace and security in the Region.

To this end, we reiterate that we are absolutely ready and willing to contribute to the success of initiatives that aim to hold an international summit on maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

Mr. President,

Delegates,

The substantial transformations that have occurred in the international political arena as a result of the grave financial crisis affecting the countries requires the people of small States, and of São Tomé and Príncipe in particular, to make major sacrifices. Thus, São Tomé and Príncipe believes that the persistent international and economic financial crisis and its effects on the economies of small countries, which have resulted in a decrease and slowdown in official international assistance, tend to threaten social cohesion as well as progress already made in fiscal discipline, improving the business climate and political stability itself.

The control and reduction of public deficits in developing countries such as ours tend to reach the limit of acceptability for our people, and good governance now demands effective measures to jump-start the economy through productive investments.

We are convinced that the most vulnerable populations, in the North as well as the South of our planet, are demanding a change in the practices and rules of the international financial system and new world governance in finance, making more accountable financial stakeholders and speculators who undermine the efforts of governments and their respective peoples to develop economies that generate human progress.

Mr. President,

Delegates,

Internally, in its program, the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe is carrying out actions that aim to reduce poverty and increase transparency in public management and economic growth. Institutional reforms, namely in the area of public finance, justice and national defense, whose purpose is to strengthen the capacities of the democratic institutions and to develop the country, have been forging ahead at a good pace.

Regarding the Millennium Development Goals, whose deadline set by the United Nations will be 2015, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe can report significant progress, particularly in the areas of education, with a literacy rate of 92% of our population, and in health, especially for fighting malaria. However, we recognize that meeting the deadline will require further effort.

To achieve these goals, our country hopes to continue to receive ongoing support in many forms from the international community.

In this regard, allow me, Mr. President, to take advantage of this opportunity to extend the sincere thanks of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe to the entire international community, and in particular to UNESCO and to all of its Member States, for recognizing the Island of Príncipe as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, which recognizes and provides further incentives for our efforts to defend and preserve the environment.

I shall conclude by repeating that the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe that I have the honor of representing stands ready and willing to take part in the effort to mobilize the will and synergy to achieve the honorable objectives that guided the creation of the United Nations.

Thank you very much for your attention.