

Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Heads of State and of Government,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe, the country that I have the honor of representing in this highest forum of international diplomacy, where all States have an equal voice regardless of size or geographic location, and which was created as a result of a pressing need for communication and dialogue among the peoples of the world, I first would like to congratulate Mr. John William Ashe for his election as President of the Sixty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

His experience as a diplomat gives us confidence that he will masterfully conduct the work of our General Assembly, which we expect to include pertinent debates around the issues of highest concern to the international community, and for which we hope to identify the best paths to consensual and lasting solutions.

We also wish to express our appreciation and esteem to His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon for his dedication and effort in conducting the work of our Organization.

We also wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremic for his positive contribution as President of the Sixty-Seventh Session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On this occasion, we are unfortunately forced to begin our intervention by expressing our most strenuous condemnation of the bloody terrorist attack in Kenya. The Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe offers our most profound sentiments of sorrow and solidarity to the people of Kenya, their Government and the bereaved families.

Our current international environment does not seem to have changed significantly since our last session. Indeed, new bloody conflicts and violent actions seem to break out almost on a daily basis, everywhere, revealing the deep disagreements and antagonisms that exist both within each State and among various States in the community of nations.

The profound imbalance in international relations, the injustice that ails trade exchanges, the enormous gulf in the access to goods and cultural values, and the glaring disparities in the access to information and knowledge among the peoples that inhabit our planet do not contribute to improving living conditions for millions of human beings. Rather, they open the way for increased conflict and threaten international peace and security.

As we do every year, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe reaffirms, in accordance with our principles, our desire to see the United Nations take on a more active role in intervening in the fight against imbalances and in the mediation and resolution of international conflicts.

The fight against poverty, the struggle against injustices, and greater dissemination of knowledge must, in our view, be of permanent concern to our Organization in order to ensure that all peoples may achieve a satisfactory level of development and dignity, as established in the Millennium Development Goals, and thus reduce the conflict and hostility that is prevalent in the world today.

Along the lines of these goals, my country has implemented extensive political and institutional reforms in various areas for the purpose of engaging all citizens in building a more democratic and transparent government, and a more participatory society in the pursuit of solutions to help us fight poverty. We have not forgotten the need to provide the entire population with easier access to education, basic healthcare, and safe drinking water, as well as modern communications, as a means to acquire more knowledge and improve their living conditions. This is an enormous effort for a country with sparse economic and financial resources, which requires international aid to be sustainable and achieve the established goals.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

My country congratulates and commends Mr. Ashe for the relevance and timeliness of the proposed theme for this session of our Organization: "Post-2015 Development Agenda." It is relevant because, despite the persistence of the financial and economic crisis that the world faces, my

country remains firmly convinced that addressing this important theme in its various dimensions during this period of sessions and through 2015 will open to each and every Member State of the United Nations the perspective of a more effective and dynamic contribution to the future we want.

In addition to identifying the progress made in implementing the eight Millennium Development Goals, the debate and reflection on the “Post-2015 Development Agenda” allow us to explore ways and means to build a more promising future for our Nations and our Peoples.

Indeed, this Sixty-Eighth Session of our Organization takes place at a time when the Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe completed two important phases of public consultation, the purpose of which is to guide our country toward restructuring the current Millennium Development Goals, and to enable us to make a positive contribution to the adoption of a New Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Good governance, economic development, human capital development, food and nutritional security, as well as peace, tranquility, and security are among the areas in which São Tomé & Príncipe must achieve better performance standards in the near future. These are the basic requirements for us to drive our country’s development.

Therefore, for the citizens of São Tomé & Príncipe, a new development agenda must offer a framework to consolidate the significant progress made in implementing the eight Millennium Development Goals, specifically in the areas of Education and Health, as well as an opportunity to advance

international political coherence and convergence for development in the context of a constantly evolving political and economic environment and challenges that are increasingly global.

In light of the above, we would like to thank the various development partners of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe for their valuable contributions in our achievement of these goals.

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Since its establishment in 1945, the United Nations has been called to play, in accordance with the principles and objectives enshrined in its charter, an important role in building and maintaining peace and security in the world as an indispensable condition for promoting development on a global scale.

However, we all agree that our Organization must adapt to the new challenges of our time. It must have an operational and functional structure that is more dynamic and flexible in order to meet the increasing demands of this new era. Therefore we must complete the reform process that the entire United Nations System is undergoing.

The Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe urges the acceleration of this process, as we believe that a broad and consensual reform of the United Nations will provide our common Organization with the greater agility,

representation, effectiveness, capacity, and legitimacy that it requires to continue to ensure peace, security, and development for its members.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Unfortunately, the bloody conflicts that seem to proliferate almost everywhere seem to emerge where one least expects instead of decreasing in number. Whether caused by social antagonisms that result from the poor distribution of wealth or by ethnic or religious intolerance, the fact is that they don't stop breaking out.

There has been no significant progress in resolving the continued conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite the laudable efforts undertaken by the international community, namely the United Nations and the African Union, toward finding a solution that will lead to peace and stability in the region. Therefore we cannot fail to appeal to the RDC's neighboring countries for constructive forms of cooperation and trust in their relationships.

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We welcome the progress made in Guinea-Bissau after so many initiatives undertaken by the international community, namely the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS, and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP). We congratulate the United Nations and African Union Representatives to Guinea-Bissau for their efforts as mediators in that country, in cooperation with the other stakeholders. This has created the

conditions for further steps to be taken in stabilizing and preparing the country for the general elections that will return the country to constitutional and democratic normality in ~~Guinea-Bissau~~, which is a profound aspiration of its people.

My country is seriously counting on this stabilization process and encourages all parties involved to do their best to achieve the established goals. In coordination with the other member countries of the CPLP, we will continue to make all efforts to contribute to the success of this process, so that peace and happiness may return to the people of our sister nation.

Mali, another country that has been tormented by a fratricidal war, finally seems to have reached an encouraging point as they recently held presidential elections with results that have been peacefully and universally accepted. We congratulate the new President and hope that he may find the best path to maintain peace and an inclusive dialogue among all Malians.

The Central African Republic lives today one of the worst moments in their history. Indeed, we observe barbaric acts being committed, such as summary executions, widespread pillage, public services falling apart, etc. This humanitarian situation has already been determined to be catastrophic by United Nations specialized agencies, and requires vigorous and urgent action. Therefore, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe, out of our concern for the suffering of the tormented people of our sister nation, appeals to the entire International Community for a more vigorous intervention to mitigate their suffering, preserve their national sovereignty,

and help their national political actors to promote national unity and political stability.

The longstanding issue of the Western Sahara calls for our attention and requires from all of us greater involvement in the search for a definitive solution for this protracted negotiation process. Therefore we welcome with satisfaction the willingness expressed by the Moroccan government to support the efforts of the International Community to reach a political, negotiated, and mutually acceptable solution, and encourage both parties to return to the negotiation process.

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Our attention is currently focused on the issue of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, which greatly disturbs navigation security and may destabilize the countries in the region. This would prevent them from taking full advantage of their natural resources, and would cause great damage to their populations. The territorial waters of São Tomé & Príncipe are more than 150 times the size of our land, and therefore we are extremely concerned with the risks that piracy acts may spread in the Gulf of Guinea.

The Heads of State and of Government of the countries that form the Gulf of Guinea Commission, which we seek to expand, very recently held a summit to adopt measures aimed at combating this scourge. But our firm action in this regard will be successful only if we can also count on the efforts of the

entire international community. The Gulf of Guinea is a point of reference in navigational routes that connect the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, as well as other important economic regions of the world, and therefore its protection merits the attention of all.

Combating piracy requires the establishment of an environment that is conducive to global security. As it is normally associated with transnational crimes such as the trafficking of arms, drugs and persons, which São Tomé & Príncipe emphatically condemns, my country has coordinated with other States in the region to combat such activities, and has taken internal steps that make it more difficult for our territory to be used for the purposes of money laundering or financing of other illicit or criminal acts.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

With respect to the bloody conflict that is assailing Syria and causing a humanitarian tragedy of great proportions, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe vehemently condemns the use of chemical weapons in violation of all international accords.

We also take this opportunity to welcome recent developments toward dismantling the Syrian arsenal of chemical weapons and urge both parties in conflict and the International Community to pursue a compromise that will lead to the cessation of hostilities and pave the way for open dialogue and negotiations within a multilateral framework, toward a political solution aimed at establishing a lasting peace.

As to the Israeli-Palestinian issue, we appeal to both Israel and Palestine to proceed with haste to resolve their differences through dialogue and based on respect for the integrity of the State of Israel and the Palestinian State's right to exist.

The Republic of Cuba, whose internal reforms we welcome, has the right to freely choose their path without any restrictions imposed by any embargo that penalizes their economic and social development, with grave consequences for their population.

We also wish to note the climate of constructive dialogue between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China, sending a positive signal that tensions are decreasing in the region, which we welcome and encourage. Both parties along the Strait of Formosa must work peacefully toward agreement and normalization of their relations. On our part, we continue to support the integration of Taiwan in international organizations.

In closing, I wish to reaffirm my country's commitment to contributing with the United Nations toward the peaceful and negotiated solution of international conflicts, and hope that the Post-2015 Development Agenda may translate into programs that help improve the living conditions of all peoples on our planet.

Thank you very much for your attention.