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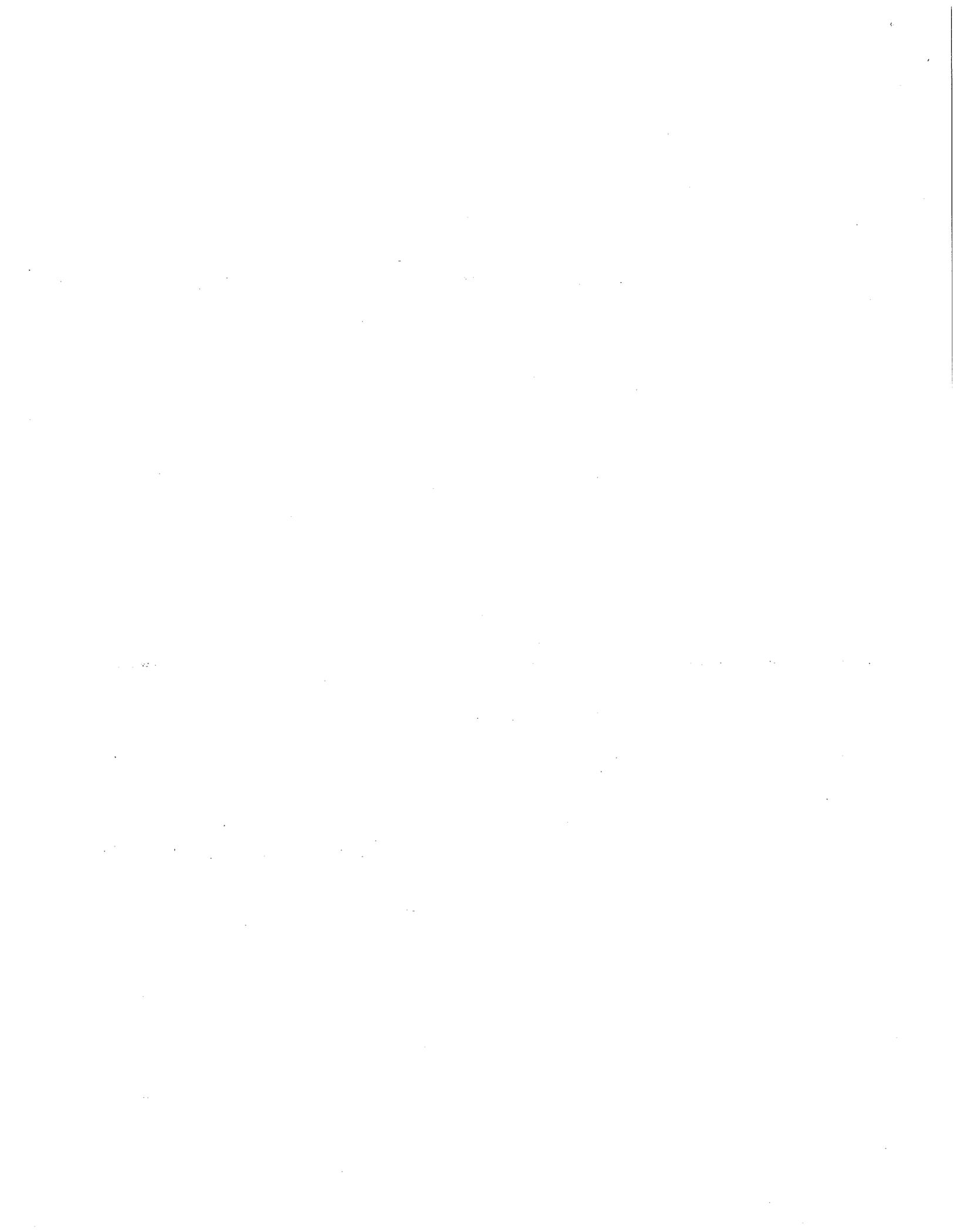
**H.E. MR. JACOB ZUMA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE OF
THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**“THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA:
SETTING THE STAGE!”**

**NEW YORK
24 SEPTEMBER 2013**

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Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellency, Secretary General of the United Nations,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates and guests,

It is an honour and a privilege for me to once again address this august body.

South Africa attaches primary importance to the United Nations General Assembly as the most representative and democratic organ of the United Nations serving the international community.

We congratulate you Mr President and the Republic of Antigua and Barbuda on your election as President of the 68th Session of the General Assembly.

We also thank Mr Vuk Jeremić for the splendid way in which he presided over the 67th Session of the General Assembly.

Mr President,

Let me begin by reiterating our condemnation of the horrific terrorist attack over the weekend in Kenya in which a number of civilians, including a South African national, were killed.

We express our deepest condolences to the Government and people of Kenya and to all families who lost their loved ones, and wish the wounded survivors a speedy recovery. We continue to support Kenya's and the international community's efforts aimed at peacekeeping, stability, democracy and nation-building in Somalia.

Mr President,

The theme for our debate this year, "*The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage!*" is most appropriate.

In the year 2000, the commitment was made by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration to eradicate extreme poverty and adopted Millennium Development Goals.

The MDGs are measurable and achievable targets that were specifically crafted to address the most pressing development needs of the most vulnerable.

The full implementation of the MDGs remains the key priority on the development agenda for the next two years.

A development agenda beyond 2015 should allow individual regions and states the space to address the development needs peculiar to their circumstances and priorities.

For Africa in particular, the future development agenda should address poverty eradication, income inequality and job creation.

We further believe that the new development agenda can only be effective if it is focused on all three dimensions of sustainable development. These dimensions are the eradication of poverty through economic development, social development and environmental sustainability.

Mr President,

We also wish to emphasize that any development agenda beyond 2015 must be based on the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities in order to equalize the international playing field.

We raise this point out of concern because it appears that the global economic meltdown has brought about new developments that are detrimental to the developing world, especially Africa.

Some of the new developments include the tendency to renegotiate the rules of the game.

New issues are being introduced as prerequisites for development and partnerships which in fact become huge non-tariff barriers. These include the green economy and clean technology.

While these issues are important for Africa and developing countries and need to be attended to, the manner in which they are crafted restrains economic development as they are used as obstacles.

We wish to emphasize as well our expectations that the developed North and developing South should continue to engage in a genuine partnership. In this regard, the developed North should stand ready to meet their commitment to contribute 0,7% of their gross national income towards Official Development Assistance.

We are aware of the challenges in the North due to the economic meltdown, but are of the view that investing in development in the South especially in Africa, is of primary importance as a source of much-needed sustainable development and stability in the world.

The tendency to attempt to delegate some of these historical responsibilities to new emerging economies in the South is unacceptable and unworkable as such emerging nations have their own historical challenges and backlogs to deal with.

Furthermore, any commitment we make to the future beyond 2015 must build on existing agreements. These include Agenda 21, the MDGs, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Rio+20 outcome. In our case as Africa, they must build on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Mr President,
Your Majesties and Excellencies,

Development and security are two sides of the same coin. The best way to ensure both is through good governance and the promotion of democratic values in all societies.

Allow me therefore Mr President to register again our serious concern that in close to 70 years after its establishment, the UN Security Council still remains undemocratic, unrepresentative and unfair to developing nations and small states, and disenfranchises the majority of the Member States of the United Nations who form the majority in this General Assembly. We cannot remain beholden indefinitely to the will of an unrepresentative minority on most important issues of international peace and security.

There has been too much talk about the need for reform, with too little action. We would like to challenge the Assembly today: Let us set ourselves the target to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations in 2015, with a reformed, more inclusive, democratic and representative UN Security Council!

Mr President,

When discussing the UN Security Council the matter of the Syrian Arab Republic comes into focus. We have expressed our dismay at the use of chemical weapons in Syria. There is no cause that could justify the use of weapons of mass destruction, by anyone or anybody under any circumstances.

It is our strongly held view that any political transition in Syria must come about as a result of the will of the Syrian people, and not as a result of a force of arms.

We welcome the recent positive developments such as the decision by Syria to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the ongoing bilateral consultations between the Russian Federation and the United States.

We support all the diplomatic efforts aimed at finding a solution to this matter. The international community has an opportunity to use the Syrian experience to ensure that matters of this nature are handled correctly going forward, using existing instruments within the multilateral system of global governance.

Mr President,

Next year South Africa will celebrate the 20th Anniversary of freedom and democracy.

We will forever be grateful to those in the international community, including the United Nations, who stood beside us in our long struggle for liberation.

We look forward to celebrating our anniversary of freedom with the United Nations and to strengthen our partnership. A strong partnership with the UN is critical for the future we want for the people of South Africa.

We also take this opportunity to thank the United Nations and the international community for support during the recent hospitalisation of our beloved founding President of a free and democratic South Africa, His Excellency Nelson Mandela.

We thank you for your support and good wishes. The UN declared 18 July, his birth date, as International Mandela Day. This has become a catalyst to promote service to humanity worldwide. We thank the UN for this gesture.

Our revered former President continues to respond to treatment at his home. His family and our people have warmly welcomed the support he continues to receive from the global community. We are humbled and very grateful for this support.

Mr President,

As we celebrate our freedom and democracy we remain mindful that our struggle is not complete until the people of Palestine and Western Sahara enjoy their right to self-determination.

In the same manner that the United Nations stood by South Africa, we would like to see this organisation being at the forefront of efforts towards self-determination for the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara.

We are deeply concerned about continued illegal settlement activities in the West Bank in violation of international law.

These illegal settlement activities jeopardize the realization of the two-state solution.

Mr President,

The Cuban people hold a special place in our hearts because of that country's sacrifice for African peoples in their quest for freedom. We will therefore continue to struggle with them for their economic liberation.

In conclusion Mr President,

The 68th Session of the General Assembly will undertake critical work for the future of our people.

Let us tackle the work ahead in a manner that, when future generations look back on this moment, they will be able to say that the leaders of this generation laid the foundation for the eradication of poverty, for building a world society of equality, and for world peace.

Let me borrow from the words of our former President Nelson Mandela on his inauguration day in 1994 when he said;

"We understand it still, that there is no easy road to freedom.

We know it well, that none of us acting alone can achieve success.

We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world.

Let there be justice for all.

Let there be peace for all.

Let there be work, bread, water and salt for all.

Let each know that for each the body, the mind and the soul have been freed to fulfill themselves".

I thank you.

