



ZIMBABWE

STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF

THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,

COMRADE R.G. MUGABE,

DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF

THE 68TH SESSION OF

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

NEW YORK, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2013.

Your Excellency, the President of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. John William Ashe,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellences, Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Comrades and Friends.

Let me begin by extending warmest congratulations to you Mr. John William Ashe, on your election as President of the 68th Session of the General Assembly. Your election to this esteemed office is a befitting tribute to the personal and diplomatic qualities that you have exhibited over the years.

Mr. President,

Throughout the world, peace and development have remained the dominant themes of our times. People all over the world have been raising their voices in favour of peace, development and cooperation and against war, poverty and confrontation. Here at the UN we all acknowledge that peace, security, development and human rights are the pillars of the UN system and the cornerstones of our collective well-being.

In this regard, the theme for this Session – *The Post 2015 Agenda – Setting the Stage* – is quite pertinent and timely as it gives fresh impetus to our undertaking that achieving the internationally agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs and mapping the way forward beyond 2015, requires our collective efforts. The UN, as the centre for international cooperation, should lead in promoting the envisaged development.

Mr. President,

Thirteen years ago, our global efforts were mobilised behind the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and we now have less than 1000 days to meet those targets. Our review and stock taking exercise reveal that while there have been some significant achievements, there are still gaps and unevenness in the attainment of these goals. In the case of Zimbabwe, we have made progress towards achieving universal access to primary education, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB. Some of the goals, however, are, due to lack of capacity, mainly financial, off track and in some areas, progress has stalled including in those areas relating to the eradication of poverty and hunger, child mortality, universal access to maternal and reproductive health, environmental sustainability and access to potable water and sanitation. As a country, we are committed to undertake coordinated efforts to accelerate progress to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs in the remaining period to 2015. Any unachieved goals by then, should be integrated into the post 2015 development agenda.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe fully shares and supports the emerging consensus that eradicating poverty in all its dimensions should be the overarching goal of our post 2015 agenda. Eradicating poverty by 2030 may be an ambitious goal, but it is attainable if we mobilise our collective efforts. Building on the foundation of the MDGs, the post 2015 agenda should go beyond the social development agenda of the MDGs and achieve structural transformation in our economies that delivers inclusive and sustainable growth. We expect a shift that will bring about industrialization, decent jobs and qualitative change to the lives of our citizens. We are determined to modernize our infrastructure

and ensure access to sustainable energy for all, food security and nutrition. However, we recognise that we cannot do this in isolation from other partners.

In the same vein, we also support calls to prioritize gender equality, the health related MDGs, education and environmental sustainability in the post 2015 development agenda among other issues. These are critical issues in our quest to achieve sustainable development for all our people.

Mr. President,

The lofty objectives of the UN Charter in the economic arena will remain unfulfilled unless all Member States join in efforts genuinely and seriously, to address challenges that developing countries face in their pursuit of development including meeting the MDGs. It is therefore imperative that our discussions address what has so far been the weakest link – the means of implementation. It must be understood that in addition to national efforts, substantial international support and an enabling international economic environment are essential if the MDGs are to be achieved by 2015 especially in Africa. It is therefore important to fulfil the commitments made to support Africa in various international fora. The UN should track the fulfilment of these commitments.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe supports the reform of the UN to strengthen its central role in promoting multilateralism and to be effective in tackling current and future global challenges. We are convinced that the reform will strengthen the organisation's capacity to fully promote and implement the principles and objectives of the UN Charter and improve its democratic decision making.

In this regard, the reforms in the economic and social actions of the UN remain of fundamental importance to us. Our firm belief in multilateral cooperation means that we place a premium in the ability of the United Nations system to deliver efficient development co-operation. The democratic transformation of the architecture of the international financial system is quintessential as is a root-and-branch reform of the international trading system. The terms of trade have hugely burdened developing countries for too long.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe supports the ongoing efforts to revitalize the General Assembly which is the most representative organ of the United Nations. We believe that the General Assembly should take the lead in setting the global agenda and restore its primacy that has over the years been encroached upon by other organs. We cannot accept situations whereby the UN Security Council is increasingly encroaching on issues that traditionally fall within the General Assembly's purview and competence, including in the area of norm setting. Indeed, recent events have revealed that its formal decisions have provided camouflage to neo-imperialist forces of aggression seeking to militarily intervene in smaller countries in order to effect regime change and acquire complete control of their wealth. This was so in Libya where in the name of protecting civilians, NATO forces were deployed with an undeclared mission to eliminate Kadaffi and his family. A similar campaign had been undertaken in Iraq by the Bush and Blair forces in the false name of eradicating weapons of mass destruction which Saddam Hussein never possessed.

We appreciate the central role that UN should play in furthering multilateralism in preference to unilateralism. In this regard, we applaud the consultations and negotiations on the eventual destruction of the chemical weapons in Syria. My country expresses its gratitude and appreciation to Russia and China for their principled stand on Syria. We hope and trust that the Syrian people

will soon sit in dialogue to discuss peace and desirable political reforms. Those western countries in pursuit of hegemony as they pretend to be advocates of democracy must be resisted.

Mr. President,

For Africa, the reform of the United Nations Security Council is especially long over due. The anachronistic and unrepresentative character of the Security Council must be redressed. For how long should Africa continue to be denied the right to play a pivotal role in the United Nations Security Council as it decides measures on conflicts within its own borders? The Security Council needs to be more representative, democratic, transparent, accountable and accessible to the wider membership for its decisions to have more legitimacy. Africa's case for the correction of the glaring historical injustice of being unrepresented in the permanent category and under-represented in the non-permanent category has been made through the clear, fair and well articulated Ezulwini Consensus. Zimbabwe remains steadfast in its support of the Ezulwini demand.

Mr. President,

Zimbabwe strongly condemns the use of unilateral economic sanctions as a foreign policy tool to effect regime change. Thus, the illegal economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the United States and the European Union violate fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter on state sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state. Moreover, these illegal sanctions continue to inflict economic deprivation and human suffering on all Zimbabweans. In the eyes of our people, the sanctions constitute a form of hostility and violence against them for the simple crime of undertaking the land reform programme by which land was put in the hands of the then majority landless Zimbabweans. Our small and peaceful country is threatened daily by covetous and bigoted big powers whose hunger for domination and control of other nations and their resources knows no bounds. Shame, shame, shame to the United States of America. Shame, shame, shame to Britain and its allies. Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans, so are its resources. Please remove your illegal and filthy sanctions from my peaceful country. If these sanctions were intended to effect regime change, well, the results of the recent national elections have clearly shown you what they can do.

Mr. President,

We are preached to daily by the west on the virtues of democracy and freedom which they do not totally espouse. Zimbabwe took up arms precisely to achieve our freedom and democracy. Yet we have been punished by United States through the odious Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act enacted in 2001 to effect regime change in the country. Now, this malicious intent to continue the relentless persecution of our small peaceful country has happened again through the USA's rejection of the recent absolutely democratic and fair election results of our July 31st general elections, even as they were applauded by the African Union and all our regional organisations. It appears that when the USA and its allies speak of democracy and freedom they are doing so only in relative terms. Zimbabwe however refuses to accept that these western detractors have the right to define democracy and freedom for us. We paid the ultimate price for it and we are determined never to relinquish our sovereignty and remain masters of our destiny. As we have repeatedly asserted Zimbabwe will never be a colony again!!

I thank you.

RGM/gm