



Nigeria

Address by

His Excellency, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR

At the 68th Ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

New York. Tuesday 24 September, 2013

**The President of the 68th Session of the
General Assembly;**

Heads of State and Government;

The Secretary-General;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr President,

1. On behalf of the Government and People of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I salute you as you preside over the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Nigerian delegation.
2. I also wish to extend our commendation to the Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and place on record, Nigeria's appreciation for his focused and committed leadership of the United Nations system.

3. This Session is coming at a particularly trying period when our world faces a number of critical challenges which make it imperative for us to work within the Charter of the United Nations to meaningfully address them.
4. It is therefore apt that the theme, ***Post 2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage***, signposts our desire and determination to actively cooperate for the improvement of the overall welfare and well-being of the most vulnerable citizens of the member-states of our Organisation.
5. Nigeria appreciates the consultative nature of designing the Post-2015 development agenda. Earlier in the year, we supported this global outreach through inclusive consultations and surveys of a number of Nigerians who have expressed their aspirations with respect to the world they expect beyond 2015.

6. A major highlight of this process, which has increased national ownership of the agenda, is the emphasis on the eradication of poverty as the overarching principle in the formulation of the successor framework.
7. Indeed, tomorrow, we will be hosting a side event on the implementation of the MDGs, in collaboration with the UN, a number of African countries, and our development partners.
8. As I had cause to say to this Assembly last Session, 2015 is not a destination but only a milestone to a better, safer, healthier and more compassionate world. Let us therefore renew our commitment to the processes that will develop the post-MDGs framework.

Mr. President,

9. This objective is of particular resonance to us in Africa where the challenges of poverty, illiteracy, food insecurity, and climate change continue to engage the attention of the political leadership.
10. The good news however, is that in the last decade, a sustained democratization process across the continent has made significant difference in governance processes, institutions and structures. Today, we have a renascent Africa that has moved away from the era of dictatorship to a new dawn where the ideals of good governance and an emphasis on human rights and justice are beginning to drive state-society relations. This is the present reality of Africa that must replace the old prejudices and assumptions about the continent.

11. We are firm in our conviction that democracy is fundamental to achieving the requisite stability that will enable the realization of a sustainable post-2015 development agenda in Africa.

12. This emergent Africa will require the continued support and partnership of the international community. An Africa that is no longer merely a destination for aid but one that is involved in constructive, multi-sectoral exchanges on the global stage. Our continent stands ready to continue to engage the rest of the world as a partner in formulating a global development agenda that will guarantee peace, security and stability.

13. I wish to express my appreciation for Nigeria's selection as co-Chair of the *Expert Committee on Financing Sustainable Development*.

14. The importance of this Committee's assignment cannot be overstated. For the post-2015 development agenda to be realistic, it must be backed by a robust financing framework which I hope will receive the strong backing of our Organisation's more endowed members.

Mr. President,

15. Nigeria's commitment to sustainable peace and security propels the country to action along with member states of our sub-regional and continental organisations, whenever stability is threatened in our continent. In recent years, Africa has had its share of conflicts notably in Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and Somalia.

16. It is noteworthy that African leaders, with the support of the international community, have demonstrated the capacity to work in concert and decisively in pursuit of long-term solutions in the affected States. While a lot more still needs to be done, we are convinced that progress is being made.

17. The recent Presidential elections in Mali herald a new beginning that should translate into peace and prosperity for its people and provide a stronger basis for stability within the sub-region. I congratulate President Boubacar Keita. Similarly, the political transition process in Guinea Bissau holds much promise. Among African leaders, there is a greater determination and focus on the transformation of the continent. This is the required impetus for the achievement of development objectives that will benefit the people, and rebrand the continent even more positively.

18. Although our world has not witnessed a global war since the establishment of the United Nations, there have been several conflicts with devastating consequences and impact in virtually all regions of the world. As global citizens, we have a sacred duty to free our world of wars, rivalries, ethnic conflicts, and religious divisions. Our collective effort in our drive for a better world will continue to bind us together.

Mr. President,

19. Nigeria continues to support the efforts of the United Nations in addressing the global initiative to combat the menace of the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We have redoubled efforts to address this onerous challenge within our borders and across the West African sub-region.

20. In doing so, we also recognize the need for a broad-based global partnership in the on-going battle against trans-border crimes, including terrorism and acts of piracy. It is regrettable that these scourges are sustained by unfettered access by non-state actors to illicit small arms and light weapons with which they foster insecurity and instability across our continent. **For us in Africa, these are the 'weapons of mass destruction'!**

21. It is therefore, in the light of our collective obligation and unceasing struggle to end this nightmare, that I congratulate Member-States on the adoption of the ***Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)*** in April this year. Our hope is that upon its entry into force, the **ATT** would herald an era of accountable trade in conventional arms which is critical to the security of nations.

22. In line with our continued commitment to this project, Nigeria has signed and ratified the Treaty. We will continue to engage other Member-States for its successful implementation.

Mr. President,

23. Terrorism constitutes a major threat to global peace and security, and undermines the capacity for sustained development. In Nigeria, the threat of terrorism in a few States in the North Eastern part of our country has proven to be a challenge to national stability. We will spare no effort in addressing this menace. We are therefore confronting it with every resource at our disposal with due regard for fundamental human rights and the rule of law.

24. Nigeria will like to place on record its appreciation to the international community for its support in this regard. The reign of terror anywhere in the world is an assault on our collective humanity. Three days ago, the stark reality of this menace was again brought to the fore by the dastardly terrorist attack in Nairobi, Kenya. **We must stand together to win this war together.**

Mr. President,

25. Piracy, like terrorism, is another menace that has attained worrisome proportions, especially in Africa's coastal waters. At the bilateral and multilateral levels, Nigeria has promoted cooperation to mitigate its impact and consequences on the security and economies of the affected coastal states.

26. Indeed, in June this year, the leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission met in Yaounde, Cameroon, and came up with practical steps to collectively confront the menace of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. This effort will, no doubt, require reinforcement and wider support and collaborative action on the part of our international partners.

Mr. President,

27. The situation in the Middle East remains volatile. The reported use of chemical weapons in the Syrian crisis, is unacceptable. Nigeria condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons that are prohibited by International Conventions.

28. We applaud the current diplomatic efforts to avert further escalation of the crisis. We urge all parties involved to end the violence and seek a negotiated solution, including the instrumentality of the United Nations.

29. The threat which nuclear weapons pose to the survival of the human race is to be understood not just in the context of aspirational nations but also the nations already in possession of such weapons. Nuclear weapons are as unsafe in the hands of small powers as they are in the hands of the major powers. It is our collective responsibility to urge the international community to respond to the clarion call for a peaceful universe in an age of uncertainty.

30. We can attain this objective if we adopt measures and policies that will promote nuclear disarmament, protect and renew our environment, and push towards an international system that is based on trust, mutual respect and shared goals.

Mr. President,

31. I believe that I express the concern of many about the slow pace of effort and apparent lack of progress in the reform of the United Nations, especially the Security Council. We believe strongly, that the call for democratization worldwide should not be for States only, but also, for International Organisations such as the UN. That is why we call for the democratization of the Security Council.

32. This is desirable for the enthronement of justice, equity, and fairness; and also for the promotion of a sense of inclusiveness and balance in our world.

33. Our support for the United Nations Security Council in its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security has been total and unwavering. We have, in previous membership of the Council, demonstrated both the political will and capacity to engage in key Council responsibilities. Nigeria has therefore decided to seek election for the 2014-2015 Non-Permanent Seat of the UNSC.

34. I am pleased to state that Nigeria has received the endorsement of the Economic Community of West African States and the African Union. We urge this august Assembly to endorse Nigeria's candidature.

Mr. President,

35. Our world continues to be confronted by pressing problems and threats. No statement that will be made during this Session can exhaust the extent of these problems. The world looks to us, as leaders, to provide hope in the midst of crisis, to provide guidance through difficult socio-political divisions, and to ensure that we live in a better world.

36. We have obligations to the present generation, but we have a greater obligation to generations yet unborn who should one day inherit a world of sufficiency irrespective of the circumstances of their birth or where they reside on the globe. We must work to make that world a reality in recognition of our common heritage.

37. We must strive to eradicate poverty, hunger, disease and human misery; we must eliminate the scourge of nuclear, chemical, biological, as well as small arms and light weapons. We must dedicate ourselves to working together to address global, regional and national challenges and deliver a more peaceful, equitable and prosperous world for all. It is our duty. We must not fail.

38. I thank you.