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**STATEMENT BY**

**BY**

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**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 69<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE**

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**THEME: "DELIVERING ON AND IMPLEMENTING A**

**TRANSFORMATIVE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA"**

**NEW YORK**

**THURSDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014**

**Your Excellency, Mr. Sam Kutesa, President of the 69<sup>th</sup>  
Session of the United Nations General assembly**

**Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations,**

**Your Majesties,**

**Your Excellencies and Your Highnesses,**

**Distinguished Heads of State and Governments,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Thanks be to the Almighty Allah for giving me another opportunity to address this global body at a time that human civilization is teetering on the brink of a major catastrophe. But before going further let me convey our warm felicitations to you Mr. President on your election to the Presidency of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Assembly. While wishing you success , I would like to assure you of the support and cooperation of The Gambia during your tenure as President of the Assembly. I would also like to commend your predecessor His Excellency Mr. John William Ashe for his able stewardship as President of the General Assembly.**

**Mr. President,**

**It is well known fact that injustice, iniquities, exclusion and greed all contribute to the creation of international tensions that could lead to catastrophic consequences, conflicts, wars, death and destruction. Today we witness lamentable inertia on the part of the United Nations as powerful member states take undue advantage over weaker members; as unjust economic and financial sanctions are imposed on other member states; others bullied and their natural resources looted; or wars waged against others simply in the name of democracy and regime change (FAKE FREEDOMS). This is not the scenario that those NOBLE and Distinguished Gentlemen; FOUNDERS, of the United Nations and its charter envisaged. What these great founding fathers of the UN intended over half a century ago was a world body committed to promoting the principles and ideals of peace and security; advancing the cause of justice and equality, freedom for all and respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of states rich or poor, black or white, big or small as well as respect for the social, spiritual, religious and cultural values of all peoples. Therefore, to uphold the founding principles of the UN Charter, member states must avoid the promotion of all forms of aggressions, confrontations and threatening tensions by exercising maximum restraint in the pursuit of their individual or**

**collective national interests at the expense of others. In fact the pursuit of one's interest at the expense of the legitimate interests and security of others is criminal.**

**Invariably, when major tensions erupt into conflicts or wars, the world economy as a whole suffers with major disruptions or reversals in developing countries. This had been evident in the wake of past regional or international conflicts when oil prices for example surged with the developing countries bearing the brunt of the debilitating consequences. In short, the UN must not be seen as a prejudicial but rather an all-embracing global body that stands for the interests not only of the few and the powerful but for all its member states.**

**Mr. President,**

**The Gambia acknowledges with satisfaction Rio+20 outcome document "*The future we want*" and the resulting establishment of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated consultative fora including the Africa Regional consultations on the Sustainable Development Goals. While The Gambia appreciates the proposals of the Open Working Group on the post 2015 development framework, it is hoped, however,**

**that the goals and targets so far outlined will reflect an integrated and transformative agenda which should ultimately build upon the gains made from the implementation of the MDGs in order to fully address the many difficult challenges we face today.**

**It is in this connection that we welcome the choice of the theme for this session namely, “Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda.” This theme is indeed pertinent and timely as it gives fresh impetus to our ardent desire to identify a set of global priorities to steer the international development agenda once the MDGs expire at the end of 2015. But in launching this new initiative, for transformative change, we must not allow novelty to mask any shortcomings of the MDGs experiment. There is need to take stock of the MDGs achievements and failures and indeed renew support to those developing countries, particularly the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries that may still have difficulties in meeting their critical MDG targets before the end of 2015.**

**Mr. President,**

**At a time when the world is facing multiple and complex challenges, there is need to pay attention to the commanding role the UN should be playing in advancing international peace and security, justice and the fundamental rights and freedoms of all peoples. The attainment of post 2015 sustainable development goals would be elusive unless the United Nations begins to execute its core mandate in earnest and exercise its commanding role in dealing with a host of local and international crises that are disruptive to development. A few current issues stand out, on which the UN is yet to be seen playing a leading role.**

**First Ebola, a deadly hemorrhagic fever that has claimed more than 2000 lives in West Africa, mostly in the severely affected countries of the Republics of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The World Health Organization has warned that if no major efforts are made in the short run, more lives would be lost and the economies of these countries would come under serious strain. Already, the World Bank and the IMF have projected that due to disruptions in the labour force and productive sectors of the economies of these countries, declines in their respective economic growth could range from 1.5-3.5 percentage points if current conditions remain unchecked.**

**For these affected countries all development efforts are now on hold as they grapple with this contagious and deadly disease. So far, it is encouraging that the US Government has committed, rather belatedly, some amount of funds and military assets to curb the spread of this disease. This gesture is more than just humanitarian aid; it is also, as President Obama said, in the “national security interest” of the United States. This is true because in a globalized, interconnected world, infectious diseases can easily spread to any part of the world. It is for this reason that the UN should take the lead to mobilize international support to fight Ebola which is an evident danger not only to West Africa but to the world at large. On this note we want to thank the Russian Federation for being one of the first major powers to respond to this outbreak of deadly Ebola by providing scientific or medical teams to some of these countries as soon as the outbreak was announced.**

**Mr. President,**

**Second; For some time now the world has been witnessing the bloodiest and most heinous form of terrorism unleashed by these satanic and sadistic human vermins disguised as Islamic militants ostensibly in the name of Islamic purity, but in reality these sons of infamy and their shameless and**

**deceitful claims of devotion to the peaceful and noble religion of Islam are in fact an insult to all true Muslims.**

**Before the emergence of the Mujahideen in Iran and later in Afghanistan in the 1980s, a movement subsequently associated to Islamic terrorism by Western mainstream media in total disregard for its creation and sponsorship by the western powers to fight proxy wars on their behalf, there existed no Islamic terrorism. Islam in its entire history has never been associated with violence or terrorism as are HARAM for a Muslim. Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance and the activities of these anti-Islamic bands of dangerous criminals who spread nothing but deep-seated hatred for human life and whose sole intention is to desecrate and defame Islam. Consequently, these treacherous elements cannot be associated to Islam, as our Islamic religion is pure and unique and cannot therefore be classified into any varying degrees like moderate, democratic, extreme or violent etc. Simply put, Islam is a pure religion that encourages the best of human behavior and inter-personal relationship amongst other virtues, as prescribed by ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR. In other words, the adherents of these lunatic fringe of bandits and gangsters like Boko Haram, Isis, Al Qaeda etc. are**



**dangerous criminals and enemies of human civilization and development; and should therefore be wiped out from the face of the earth.**

**Third, the situation in the Middle East remains highly volatile, and the UN has been watching the cycle of violence in the region rather helplessly. In the most recent conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis, about more than 2000 people from Gaza, mostly women and children died at the hands of Israel and about 70 Israelis all of them soldiers except for 3 children lost their lives. Despite repeated calls for restraint by the international community, the continuing expansion of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land undermines any prospects for a two-state solution. The US government has been playing very strategic and useful mediating role in the past, but the UN must take up its commanding role in seeking a peaceful settlement that is just and durable and acceptable to the members of the United Nations.**

**Fourth, as part of its core mandate in promoting global peace and security and greater understanding among peoples of different backgrounds and cultures, the UN must do more to advocate a culture of peace, tolerance and**

**understanding not only among the world's great religions but also among member states themselves. This is important as we continue to witness growing propagation of disinformation and misrepresentation especially by the western media about Islam in general and the application of the Sharia Law particularly in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is the birth place of Islam, and Sharia is the legal system in Islam, and it is the only divine Constitution of not only the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia but all Islamic States. Therefore the incessant criticisms and misrepresentations about the application of Sharia Law in Saudi Arabia or anywhere else is disrespectful and therefore abhorrent. It is an insult to all true Muslims to describe Sharia Law as Barbaric. As a matter of fact the most Barbaric laws are those that are not based on any divine teachings. Sharia is the legal system that the ALMIGHTY ALLAH has prescribed for all Muslims**

**Mr. President,**

**In the same vein, the UN General Assembly should be commended for the passage two years ago, of the World Interfaith Harmony Week urging member states to designate the first week of February each year as the Interfaith Week when the messages of goodwill and tolerance are spread**

**through mosques, churches and other places of worship. While this was a good beginning for promoting peace and harmony among religions and peoples of different belief systems, the UN must do more to match the continuing attacks on Islam in particular by people who do not even believe in the existence of a supreme creator CALLED ALLAH. These infidels have no moral high ground to describe any religion worthy of high praise more so one that is as authentic, pure and noble as Islam.**

**Finally the United Nations must play its central role in addressing the injustices associated with the unilateral or bilateral application of economic and financial sanctions by one member state against another as a coercive tool of foreign policy, because it contravenes the fundamental principles of international law, international humanitarian law and the principles and norms governing peaceful coexistence among sovereign states. In this regard The Gambia calls on the United States government to unconditionally end the long standing US embargo on Cuba that has brought about untold hardship on the Cuban people. Is it not ironic that the same power talking today about respecting Ukrainian Sovereignty and freedom to choose their own way of life is the same power that has maintained unjustifiable collective punishment (embargo) on the Cuban**

**people for almost five decades thereby devastating their economy because like the Ukrainians today the Cubans decades ago opted for a system of governance of their choice.**

**Mr. President,**

**Climate change and development are inextricably linked. The impact of climate change is felt in all countries, particularly developing countries as it undermines their ability to achieve sustainable development. While Africa is not responsible for the pollution and the factors causing climate change, it stands to suffer the most. With 96% of Africa's agriculture being dependent on rainfall and 50% of fisheries related jobs estimated to be lost by 2050, climate change poses dire consequences to livelihoods in Africa. The Gambia firmly believes that mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, calls for a timely and decisive global response. It is a challenge that should unite us not divide us. In this regard the Gambia joins other countries affected by climate change and like-minded groups in urging developed countries that are parties to the United Nations Framework Conventions on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to fully implement their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.**

**Mr. President,**

**In 1974 this Assembly adopted the Declaration for the Establishment of the New International Economic Order (NIEO), which was designed to address some legitimate concerns of developing countries such as improving their terms of trade and other issues relating to the promotion of a more equitable international economic system. Many of the political economic and social issues that inspired the NIEO still remain unanswered, four decades after that historic declaration. As the post 2015 agenda attracts our attention today, we must not relegate those old concerns of developing countries to the dustbin of history. In a nutshell their old concerns as well as their new aspirations must no longer be relegated. To that end, the foundation of any transformative agenda should logically begin with genuine reform of the institutions of global governance, particularly the United Nations System.**

**Given the current membership of the United Nations Security Council, the reform of this important organ of the world body is long overdue. We African Leaders have for a long time been calling attention to restoring the effectiveness and legitimacy of the UN by allocating two permanent Seats with full veto power as well as two non-**

**permanent seats on the Security Council to reflect current geopolitical realities.**

**If the demands for the reform of the Security Council in the interest of equity and justice cannot be accommodated then concrete action must be taken for the General Assembly to assume all the powers of the Security Council and its responsibilities including the power to impose sanctions. Under this arrangement all decisions of the UNGA would have been voted and endorsed by the majority of its members thus ensuring a more democratic and transparent global body called the UN.**

**On a final note, I want to call the attention of the UNGA and the UN Security Council to the very frequent and mysterious sinking, capsizing etc. of boats carrying mostly Black African migrants looking for greener pastures in the West only to end up in body bags on European shores. Strangely enough, those countries that pretend to love Africans so much that they are always preaching to African leaders Good Governance, the rule of law and respect for human life and Rights have been apparently quiet about the very dangerous, racist and inhuman behaviour of deliberately causing boats carrying Black Africans to sink only to select**

**a few lucky ones to be rescued and sent to concentration camps, called Asylum Seekers Camps. These camps are as bad as Nazi Concentration Camps and nobody, country or Human Rights Institutions has ever raised the alarm to this GENOCIDE in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

**Mr. President, if earlier Africans that received the European Explorers before colonialism treated them the same way, Africa would not have been colonized for 400 years. The European Explorers were nothing short of people seeking greener pastures for their fellow Europeans, as Europe then had turned into brown pastures. After 400 years of colonial looting and misrule Africa is reduced from green to brown pasture due to over grazing. Now African Explorers are not only unwelcome but are greeted with instant death.**

**The UN must conduct a full and impartial investigation into this man-made sinking, capsizing of these boats carrying young Africans to Europe. If these boats are able to cross the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea only to sink on European coasts, we must find out what deadly mysterious force exists on the European Mediterranean Coasts that causes Boats carrying young Africans to disintegrate and sink upon arrival. Racism, greed and hate**

**can only breed hatred violence and disastrous confrontation between races. We African Leaders would stand up together, I hope, to protect these young Africans from mass murder on European Coasts. I hereby call on the UN to commission such an investigation as a matter of priority and urgency in order to avert a major racial confrontation. Out of hundreds of European explorers to the Gambia in those days, only one died on the River Gambia over a span of four hundred years.**

**Today, over a five year period more than 500 young Gambians have died on European Coasts. Enough is enough and the UN must intervene and intervene quickly or else we will all live to regret our failure to take appropriate action at the right time.**

**Mr. President,**

**Geopolitical realities have changed. Let the west accept these realities and together with us endeavour to change along with these realities as we move together towards the brighter and peaceful future we want. So-called military super powers should know that humanity would be returned**



**to pre-Stone Age if they are reckless enough to unleash World War III. You cannot have your cake and eat it how you please and at the same time dictate to others how, when and where they should eat their cake. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century humanity needs only super powers of peace and development and not Medieval Europe-type of war mongers. Why can't we accept the diversity of the human race and its attendant diversity in culture, religion and way of life as each diverse groups deems fit?**

**I thank you for your attention.**