



خطاب صاحب الفخامة السيد محمد ولد عبد العزيز، رئيس
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**SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY MOHAMED OULD ABDEL
AZIZ, PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF
MAURITANIA, PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION,
DURING THE 69th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 24, 2014

**DISCOURS DE SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR MOHAMED
OULD ABDEL AZIZ, PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE
ISLAMIQUE DE MAURITANIE, PRESIDENT EN EXERCICE
DE L'UNION AFRICAINE, A LA 69^{ème} SESSION DE
L'ASSEMBLEE GENERALE DES NATIONS UNIES**

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Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Excellency Mister Secretary General of the United Nations;

Distinguished Delegates;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am pleased, on behalf of the African Union and on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, to express to you, Mister President Sam Kutesa, my warmest congratulations and my best wishes on the occasion of your election as President of the 69th United Nations General Assembly. I trust that your good judgment and your competencies as well as your long experience in diplomatic leadership for your brotherly country, Uganda, constitute the best guarantee of a good conduct and success of the works of our present session.

I am also pleased to point out the remarkable work of your predecessor, Mister John W. Ashe, during his leadership of the works of the previous session.

I would also like to express my warmest thanks to His Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mister Banki Moon, for his tireless efforts towards international peace and security and for his approach in favor of dialogue as the best means of addressing current international issues.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The General Assembly of the United Nations has always been a forum for the exchange of opinions and the discussion of important international issues which affect the life of nations and people. This explains the privileged status it has gained within the different institutions of the United Nations System. This annual meeting which brings leaders together is a valuable opportunity to look for a common understanding for a global vision ensuring proposals for efficient solutions to the international problems at hand and which are capable of responding to the expectations of people around the world.

In this regard, I am pleased to speak to your honorable audience and present to the world, through your forum, what we, Africans, have done in terms of achievements and development, what challenges our young continent is facing, what we expect from the international community and what we aspire for in terms of efficient contribution in the management of the current situation, humanity and the construction of its future.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Several countries of the African continent have experienced high levels of growth in spite of the severe economic crisis which still prevails in the world. The average growth rate in the continent has reached 5% and is now close to 6%. This economic recovery is the result, among other factors, of the wise economic policies adopted by African governments.

The promotion of local and foreign investments, the creation of new infrastructures and a greater attention to the most vulnerable members of the society have thus been encouraged.

Likewise, projects and income generating activities were supported, thus contributing efficiently to the reduction of unemployment, in particular among young people and women.

Africa is working relentlessly to change from a consumption space to a production zone in order to guarantee employment opportunities for millions of its people.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The achievement of food self-sufficiency, the development of agricultural industries and poverty reduction in rural areas constitute core objectives of the African Union.

In this regard, the sector of agriculture and animal resources has enjoyed great interest during the successive African summits. Hence, 2014 has been declared the "year of agriculture and self-sufficiency in Africa".

The sector of agriculture employs close to 60% of the work force and represents one third of the gross domestic product of the continent.

In this framework, the African summit recommended that 10% of the budget of African States be allocated to the development of the sector of agriculture.

African governments have recognized the importance of food security and adopted efficient policies for the development of this vital sector. Such policies reached their objectives and allowed some African countries to be self-sufficient in different agricultural products while other countries are making steady progress on this path.

In Africa, we aim for a fruitful cooperation with our partners, thus opening the international markets to our agricultural products, allowing the development of our capacities in the sectors of agricultural research and providing access to developed technologies and techniques for the preservation of the environment.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

When the millennium objectives were adopted in 2000, Africa did not have a common vision about the great development issues and its voice was not reported as required. In spite of this, we have worked with seriousness and vitality to reach these objectives. Today, Africa speaks with one voice, seeks to create development to become a healthy area free of scourges, wars and conflicts, and where justice, good governance and respect of human rights prevail.

In this regard, the African leaders have taken important decisions on core issues for the continent, among which the vision of the African Union at the horizon of 2063 and the post 2015 development agenda which focuses on the development of human resources and the eradication of poverty, disease epidemics and deadly diseases.

It must be pointed out that the fight against Aids, malaria and tuberculosis has been reinforced through multiple programs which helped to pursue actions aiming at reducing the effects of such scourges. In spite of these efforts, the indicators in the sector of health lead us to exert every effort to consolidate our system of health, to improve access to its services and develop its human resources and its infrastructures.

In this framework, African heads of state recently launched a strong initiative to fight AIDS.

The sudden outbreak of the Ebola virus in West Africa constitutes a major challenge due to the rapid spread of the disease and the tragic end of its victims. The measures taken to contain the spread of this scourge remain insufficient and of limited efficiency. Every passing day before the discovery of an appropriate treatment of this disease increases the number of victims and extends its area of spread to include new zones. In spite of the measures taken and the efforts made, Africa has not succeeded to date to successfully face this epidemic.

Consequently, I appeal to the international community from this tribune, as I stand here, to work efficiently for the provision of vaccines for the treatment of people affected by the Ebola virus, to support the means of prevention, to control its spread and increase investments in the sector of scientific research in virology and endemic diseases, and to provide assistance to countries affected by this scourge.

At this stage, we welcome the actions and initiatives of certain States and international organizations in favor of the countries affected by the spread of this disease.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The phenomenon of illegal immigration and the tragedies it engenders every day invite us for a strong action to find efficient and rapid solutions. We cannot just count the bodies washed up onto the beaches or undertake rescue operations at sea for thousands of migrants crammed in unsafe boats.

Illegal immigration which is a complex phenomenon is the cumulated result of economic factors and practices linked to organized crime. Consequently, whatever the level of vigilance in border surveillance and the rigor of the laws, putting an end to the waves of migrants from South to North will be unsuccessful. Therefore, this will require appropriate solutions taking into consideration the real causes of this phenomenon and allowing the creation of appropriate conditions to guarantee more employment opportunities and a dignified life for the African youth.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good governance constitutes the prior condition to the success of development efforts. The African political elite is fully aware of this situation and is committed to promoting the collective freedoms and the consolidation of democratic system as the best mean of managing public affairs.

The African union has taken dissuasive provisions against all attempts at taking over the power by non democratic means, which provided a boost to democratic practice, established pluralism and led to the organization of several transparent elections.

The democratic system involves, in essence, the participation of all the components of the civil society. The nature of African societies has imposed the establishment of positive discrimination in favor of women, allowing them access to elective offices and decision-making spheres in order to guarantee more gender justice.

In this framework, the youth enjoys priority in development plans and in the political and social policies of African countries. It is foreseen that the

population of the continent will reach three billion individuals at the horizon of 2050, of which the youth represent two thirds. This demographic situation which is specific to the continent calls for the refocusing of investments on infrastructure and social services, and giving priority to housing, employment, human resources development, diversification of energy sources and health. Focus must also be placed on teaching and vocational training in line with needs of the market, which will contribute to controlling unemployment and allowing the youth to showcase their talent.

As a matter of fact, the unemployment faced by our societies is not the result of the lack of employment opportunities, but in most cases it is the result of the inadequacy between the training outputs and the actual needs of the job market.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

In the domain of security, we are facing today many dangers resulting from the multiplication of hotbeds of tension, terrorism, organized crime and trafficking of drugs, arms and people. All these dangers have a cross-border nature and some African regions have not been spared due to the weakness of democratic practice, the growing of encapsulated identities and cultures as well as economic crises with the associated social tensions and the precarious situation of the educational system, and their consequences in terms of unemployment and excesses among the youth.

In order to face such challenges, the African Union established efficient mechanisms using the African peace and security architecture which includes the Peace and Security Council and the African Rapid Crisis Reaction Capability.

In spite of the efforts and achievements, the fight against terrorism remains an international responsibility which calls for a close collaboration between all the members of the international community, as it is understood that no country can, alone, eradicate this phenomenon.

The fruitful cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Council for Peace and Security helped, in an efficient manner, to find solutions for many armed conflicts in our continents. However, and in spite of such efforts, the resolution of the situation in Somalia is still complex. Similarly, the situations in Libya, North Nigeria and Central Africa constitute real cause for concern.

In Libya, the situation keeps deteriorating dangerously and regrettably, outlining the premises of a civil war which threatens the unity of the country, exposes its people to exile and risks to expand its dangers to neighboring countries if the international community does not intervene to help the Libyans to find a peaceful and consensual solution guaranteeing the unity and stability of Libya,

In North Nigeria, the Boko Haram movement continues to carry out criminal assassinations of innocent people, kidnapping of women and destruction of entire villages. In order to face this terrorist group, it is necessary that Africa and the rest of the international community join their efforts for a decisive action to eliminate this danger which threatens the whole region.

Concerning the Republic of Central Africa, the efforts of the African peace force, with the support of friendly forces, helped to end the massacres and prevent the conflict from evolving towards a global civil war. But tension between the social components still prevails. This requires that we encourage the Central African stakeholders to make use of this stage of the transition to overcome all that is likely to hinder the peace and stability process in the country.

However, these situations should not make us overlook the achievements made in the consolidation of peace in many torn regions. In this framework, we welcome the progress made in the region of the Great Lakes, in North Mali and in the Republic of South Sudan.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Sahel was one of the first regions to experience the phenomenon of terrorism. But thanks to the close security cooperation between the countries of the region and the international solidarity, the terrorists were pushed back and the activities of illegal trafficking networks were paralyzed. Africans has rigorously faced a difficult situation in North Mali. Thus, several countries of the continent, along with international friendly forces fought against terrorist groups. The risk of terrorism was removed from the vital areas which served as a base for the launching of criminal terrorist operations. The French intervention was determinant and appropriate. Likewise, history will retain the great sacrifices made and which are still made by the brave soldiers from Tchad. But the region is still exposed to security risks which are for now relatively contained.

The eradication of terrorism in the Sahel constitutes a major challenge which adds to the requirements for development and poverty reduction. There is a close correlation between development and security, as it is not possible to imagine sustainable development without security, or security without global development.

In this context, the countries of the region are aware of the need to create a regional framework for the coordination of the efforts to develop the area, on the one hand, and for struggling against the danger of terrorism and cross-border crime, on the other hand. Hence, the Group of 5 countries of the Sahel was created during the summit of member States held in Nouakchott last February.

The international community is invited to join Africans in their hopes and legitimate aspirations for peace, security and sustainable development.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The conflict in the Middle East, which escalates from time to time, without any hope of clear and definite solution in spite of the multiple Arab and international initiatives, constitutes a permanent danger to peace in the world.

This requires that the parties in conflict accept to make sacrifices, even painful ones, and that the international community put more pressure and take action to find a rapid and fair solution to this conflict on the basis of the international resolutions in the matter, including those which guarantee to the Palestinian people the establishment of an independent State with Al Qods Echerive as its capital.

Additionally, the dangerous situations in Syria and Iraq which are the results of the expansion of terrorism constitute a great cause for concern for the international community.

We welcome the measures taken recently to face the terrorist groups in Iraq and we invite the parties in conflict in Syria to denounce violence and to engage in negotiation to avoid more destruction to their country.

Likewise, the crisis in Ukraine must be resolved peacefully and rapidly in order to preserve peace in the world and prevent the situation from generating tensions between the major powers.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The African continent aims to reinforce its presence in forums and international institutions, in compliance with its dimension and role, so that these forums and institutions become more representative of people and nations. If the United Nations General Assembly is an international institution in which all the countries are represented equally, the status of permanent member of the Security Council remains the monopoly of a restricted number of countries. This privilege which dates back to the second world war of the last century no longer expresses the international geopolitical reality and does not take into account the profound transformations experienced throughout the world. Today, Africa holds an important position in the world and plays a considerable role within the international community; this predisposes Africa to its permanent representation in the United Nations Security Council.

It is important to engage in negotiations on the conventions to extend the permanent and non permanent representativeness within the Security Council in order to obtain results as soon as possible.

The establishment of justice at the international level also entails a reform of the world economic system to make it more equitable through a greater promotion of the role of the United Nations in the efforts to reinforce transparency, the regulation of the financial system and the encouragement of the necessary investments for sustainable development.

Mister President;

Your Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Finally, I should like to express to you, Mister President, Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses, participants in the 69th United Nations General Assembly, my sincere thanks for the considerable efforts made for the success of our current session.

The achievement of noble objectives for which the United Nations were established remains dependent upon the freedom of the people of the world to exercise their right to development and to take advantage of wealth and progress so that all mankind will live in dignity, freedom, justice and equality.

I wish you every success in your work.

Thank you