



Democratic Republic of São Tome and Príncipe

STATEMENT FROM HIS EXCELLENCY

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AT THE 70TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

New York, October 02, 2015

Mr. President

Mr. Secretary-General

Heads of State and Government

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

Excellencies,

It is my distinct honor and privilege to participate in the proceedings of this august General Assembly on behalf of and representing the Democratic Republic of São Tomé & Príncipe.

I firstly and respectfully would like to congratulate Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for his election to the presidency of this 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and express our full support throughout his term. May it be full of successes.

Indeed, his election is a result of the recognition by the Member States of our Organization, of his noble humanity, vast political experience, and unblemished professional history.

Before we begin to address the various topics that are of crucial importance as contributions to a better world, we must remember that this year marks the 70th anniversary of this Organization, which should provide the Member States with the opportunity to deeply reflect on the road that has brought us this far as well as the different reforms that must be introduced in order to make it more representative, legitimate, dynamic, efficient, inclusive, and ever more responsive to the reality and challenges imposed by armed conflicts, climate changes, migrant/refugee crises, economic deregulation, endemic diseases, poverty, and hunger!

Against this backdrop, Mr. President, we welcome the relevance of the themes of this Session, which continue to reflect the reality of our times. The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the proper framing and resolution of climate change issues will surely create a path toward sustainable development for developing countries, particularly in the African continent.

We further wish to express our appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the competent, selfless, and zealous manner in which he has led our Organization.

We also pay tribute to outgoing President Sam Kutesa, who served as President of our General Assembly with dedication and strength during the past twelve months.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have focused on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for some time now, and this year we have shifted our attention to the Post-2015 Agenda, which was the focus of an important Forum that gathered world leaders this past September 25th, on the margins of the 70th Session of the General Assembly, for the purpose of approving new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indeed the MDGs proved to be a good catalyst to mobilize synergies and achieve progress in social development – reduction of poverty, hunger, and disease; advances in maternal health; and access to drinking water. During this period, there were

major geopolitical and economic shifts. We believe that the multidimensional nature of poverty and fragility has changed.

We hope that the development process in this new phase may be more inclusive, qualitative and, as the name suggests, sustainable for all, with all regions of our planet taking ownership and making commitments.

For this purpose, Africa chose, as its path toward economic and sustainable development, six pillars that are important to mention here:

i) Structural economic transformation and inclusive growth; ii) Science, technology, and innovation; iii) People-centered development; iv) Sustainable environment, natural resources, and natural disaster management; v) Peace and security; vi) Finances and partnerships.

We believe that, in erecting these pillars, Africa will take significant and necessary steps to guide the continent toward fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of its peoples, thus ensuring ever greater integration, prosperity, and peace, under African leadership, with top priority for the dignity and identity of our sons and daughters. This will enhance the capacity for creation, innovation, and production, with an immediate and direct impact on the economy and sustainable human development because it will be properly sustained!

Our country, São Tomé & Príncipe, believes in the above and urges the United Nations to adapt its programs to the specific realities of the African continent without losing sight of its accomplishments with the achievement of some of the eight Millennium Development Goals by some countries.

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Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Unfortunately we continue to see persistent hotbeds of tension as well as the emergence of new ones with humanitarian repercussions of alarming proportions throughout the world.

In Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the efforts undertaken by regional organizations, the African Union, and the United Nations have introduced some stability to the conflict zones. These efforts must continue to be coordinated and channeled in order to consolidate and reinforce the achievements.

The perennial issue of the Western Sahara remains in the international scenario and, as such, requires greater engagement from all of us in searching for a permanent solution for this negotiation process, which has dragged on and has become, for some time, stagnated. However, to its merit, armed conflict has not resumed! We appeal to the parties involved to return to the negotiations and find a mutually acceptable political solution.

We are heartened by the recent resolution of the political situation in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, where a serious political crisis has been overcome without recourse to violence and in strict

accordance with the Rule of Law, which bears clear testimony of the democratic maturity that our brothers and sisters have achieved.

As terrorism continues to be a central issue in current international politics and in light of renewed acts of terrorism throughout the world, it seems to us that the International Community must act in a coordinated manner. Only then will we be able to fight this global scourge.

In this regard, we wish to clearly and strongly condemn the repeated and hideous crimes that the Boko Haram group has been perpetrating in our neighbor and sisterly nation of Nigeria. In our opinion, nothing can justify the atrocities that Boko Haram terrorists have committed, and we wish to take this opportunity in this privileged forum to reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of such practices, which are unacceptable in every way.

To our Nigerian brothers and sisters, we wish to express the unwavering support and heartfelt solidarity of all Santomeans, as well as our wish that you may be able to eradicate this evil that unfortunately continues to exist and all the consequences that we all know.

In the Middle East, we unfortunately continue to observe bloody conflicts and the loss of human lives with the ongoing hostility between Israel and Palestine. Therefore we again appeal for a peaceful and negotiated solution that upholds both the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the State of Israel's right to exist, in accordance with the pertinent United Nations Resolutions.

Two free and sovereign states living side by side in peace and reciprocal and full cooperation for development.

Similarly, we cannot fail to comment on the persistence of the domestic conflict in Syria and its disastrous consequences. We again appeal to the International Community to make all efforts to achieve a cessation of hostilities, thus opening the way for a frank dialog toward a political solution for the reestablishment of a lasting peace.

Nevertheless, the prevailing situation affords us an opportunity for deeper reflection, in light of the migrant crisis that has the Mediterranean as the main access point to Europe. Indeed, the waves of people of all ages that are reaching Europe from war zones are not migrants. They are refugees! They are not evading poverty nor hunger. They are literally running away from death!

When a mother places a young child in a precarious boat for a difficult journey across a rough sea, with criminals at the helm, she does so because she considers this to be safer than the terra firma that is left behind.

Therefore, we must seriously reflect on this episode and the lessons that it teaches us regarding the signs of these new times, and draw our conclusions. We must refrain from promoting/exporting *democracy* in an exogenous and meddling manner or, worse still, through aggression and/or violence.

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We believe that you will agree with us when we affirm that global security is vital to ensure sustainable development for our countries, and that it should begin at the regional and local level.

Located in the Gulf of Guinea, where we have seen a fresh outbreak of acts of maritime piracy, terrorism, drug trafficking, oil heists, and other transnational organized crimes, São Tomé & Príncipe understands that the International Community must combine its efforts to put a stop to such acts. Therefore, please allow us to list the various existing partnerships, both bilateral and multilateral, as well as the cooperation among ECCAS, ECOWAS, and GGC in implementing the recommendations of the Yaoundé Summit, which have allowed for significant progress in the relentless fight against this type of criminal organizations in our region.

With respect to the World Climate Summit that will take place this year in Paris, São Tomé & Príncipe believes that it is imperative that we reach a Global Agreement on Climate Change, as our country is already being affected by its nefarious effects, even though we are not an active polluter. Our vulnerabilities include, for example, the reduction in rainfall and, as a consequence, the diminished flows of our rivers, as well as floods and the gradual erosion of our coasts. These are warning signs that are already causing concerns with respect to our country's climate problems, which we have been combating by stopping deforestation and protecting our coastal areas.

Therefore, we welcome Germany and France's determination to make all efforts necessary to reach a climate agreement that is ambitious, broad, and binding on all parties, in accordance with the

general rules of International Law, with the ultimate objective of limiting the increase of global temperature to at most two degrees Celsius (2 °C), as compared to pre-industrial levels, which constitutes, in our opinion, a responsibility that is shared among developing countries and developed countries.

We hope that this agreement, once it is reached, will enhance the international obligation of all signatory parties to make funds available for the continued scientific monitoring of climate issues and the transfer of technology to developing countries as a way of improving actions toward the achievement of the convention's goals.

Excellencies,

In December of 2014, São Tomé & Príncipe effusively welcomed the announcement regarding the reestablishment of relations between the United States of America and Cuba, and joined the world in jubilation over the recent opening of diplomatic missions in both capitals, which thus resumed full diplomatic relations. As we did then, we would like to express our wish that both countries continue to strengthen their relationship on the path of economic, social, and cultural progress for the benefit of both their peoples and humanity in general.

To this end, one issue remains pending – the trade embargo imposed against Cuba. It made no sense in the past, and it makes no sense now! For this reason, São Tomé & Príncipe persists in appealing for the lifting of this embargo, which would be a signal of a relationship without handicaps and would allow both countries to

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take a fair and equitable advantage of trade relations between them and on equal footing with the other countries of the world.

In conclusion, we could not fail to acknowledge and welcome the political progress that has been achieved by both sides of the Taiwan Strait, with a clear reduction of tensions, ever greater openness, and broad trade exchanges.

In addition, given the multiple potentials that Taiwan offers, we believe that it would be recommendable for Taiwan to participate in the United Nations specialized agencies, as they already do in the WHO.

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Finally, we reiterate our country's availability and continued participation in the effort to mobilize wills and synergies for the materialization of the fundamental principles and noble objectives that guided the establishment of the United Nations.

Thank you very much for your attention.