



NATIONAL STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. WILLIAM S. RUTO PHD., C.G.H,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE KENYA DEFENCE
FORCES**

ADDRESSING

**THE 78TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

‘MULTILATERALISM ON TRIAL’

**THURSDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER 2023
NEW YORK**

1. The world over today, hundreds of millions of people are besieged by anxiety about their present and future security, dignity and prospects of well-being. Many are victims and witnesses of present assaults and many more are afraid of future violations of their most fundamental expectations.
2. In his opening address, our **Secretary-General** provided a graphic snapshot of the condition of the world and humanity, a situation that calls into question the state of multilateralism in terms of its founding aspirations, as well as its present agenda.
3. The poverty, fear, suffering and humanitarian distress haunting the victims of conflict, drought, famine, flooding, wildfires, cyclones, deadly disease outbreaks and other disasters, are the outcomes of sustained violation of the most essential principles, and the systematic neglect of humanity's dearest values, which lie at the very foundation of the UN charter.
4. The failure of peace and security systems, inadequate development, and limited climate action, amidst technological advancement and enormous wealth, has left us in a state of paralysis, enduring one of the darkest periods of human existence.
5. We may all agree, without any fear of contradiction, that the world is headed in a most undesirable direction. It is moments like this that the affirmative spirit of multilateralism, international collective action and global solidarity is most needed and should be attainable.
6. This is not the occasion for any member of the United Nations to escape, when they should be rising to the challenge of the moment. Resorting to the pursuit of narrow, insular and antisocial agendas within exclusive clubs constituted to maintain the *status quo* that undermines and cannibalises the United Nations system at the expense of progress in humanity's collective journey to the future of our aspirations, is totally unacceptable.
7. The existence of these inimical clique of geopolitical formations defies the fundamental values and principles of the UN system, and its operations have led to alienation, mistrust, insecurity and exclusion of and among peoples, nations, regions and continents.
8. Moments like now place the nature and purpose of multilateralism under sharp scrutiny for history's honest examination and judgement. If any confirmation was ever needed that the **United Nations Security Council** is dysfunctional, undemocratic, non-inclusive, un-representative and therefore incapable of delivering meaningful progress in our world as presently constituted, the rampant impunity of certain actors on the global scene settles the matter.

9. The environment of pervasive mistrust - between the global north *versus* south, developed *versus* the developing, rich versus poor, polluters *versus* victims and net emitters *versus* net victims- which complicates and frustrates multilateralism, is the inevitable result of promises not kept, commitments not actualised, resolutions not honoured, and principles not observed. Multilateralism has been failed by the abuse of trust, negligence and impunity.
10. A year ago, I stood in this Assembly Hall to call upon the global community to transform the UN system in order to achieve a consensus-driven, rule-based multilateral system which works for the people of the world in their diversity. It is time for multilateralism to reflect the voice of the farmers, represent the hopes of villagers, champion the aspirations of pastoralists, defend the rights of fisherfolk, express the dreams of traders, respect the wishes of workers and, indeed, protect the welfare of all peoples of the world.
11. In the face of the most urgent crises of our time, it is now clear that the international community has fallen seriously behind in meeting its targets in both climate action and the implementation of the sustainable development goals, as well as their underlying enabler, **peace and security**.
12. We as Africa have come to the world, not to ask for alms, charity or hand-outs, but to work with the rest of the global community and give every human being in this world a decent chance of security and prosperity, by taking necessary actions, mobilising adequate resources for investment, confronting security challenges and resolving conflicts, as we also make our contribution to global prosperity.
13. Kenya is proud of the contributions it continues to make in its tireless endeavour to support peace-making, conflict prevention, peace keeping, peace building, and other interventions undertaken across different regions.
14. All across Africa, there is progress in efforts to resolve conflicts, and restore peace and stability while, at the same time, we are witnessing setbacks to democratic consolidation in the form of unconstitutional changes to government. Kenya remains committed, determined and indefatigable in its contributions to unity, peace, security, stability, and prosperity.
15. Often, we have made encouraging progress. For example, On 5th December 2022, the **Juba Peace Agreement** ushering in a two-year transition was signed by the parties to the conflict in **Sudan**. A day afterwards, the **Inter-Congolese Dialogue**, an EAC-led process, concluded its third session in Nairobi. The following day, the government of **Somalia** and **Somaliland** agreed to resume reconciliation. We are also proud of the progress made in stabilising Eastern DRC as a result of the EAC Regional Force, setting the **DRC** on the path to sustainable peace and stability.

16. In **Ethiopia**, the guns have fallen silent following the **Pretoria** and **Nairobi** agreements, while in **South Sudan**, the parties have committed to explore ways to resume and conclude the stalled peace process, and to hold elections. Our proactive commitment to peace, which is not limited to our continent, inspired us to dispatch the **African Peace Delegation**, consisting of six African heads of states to **Moscow** and **Kiev** with a **ten-point peace plan**, beginning with efforts to initiate a mediation process to resolve the conflict between **Russia** and **Ukraine**.
17. Although the delegation encountered significant challenges in their mission, we remain very proud that they showed up. The hunger for peace and security in Africa is evident, and this bodes well for the prospects of attaining the **African Union's Agenda 2063** and global peace.
18. Kenya stands in solidarity with all humanity, without regard to region or border or hemisphere. This is why, and how we see the people of the **Republic of Haiti**, who are suffering immensely from the bitter legacy of slavery, colonialism, sabotage and neglect.
19. As a nation which was forced to wage a painful struggle for our independence and sovereignty, Kenya empathises very deeply with the humiliation of a proud people, and the price they have had to pay for their hunger for liberty, and the sorrow they have endured for their thirst for freedom.
20. **Haiti** is the ultimate test of international solidarity and collective action. The international community has failed this test so far, and thus let down a people very, very badly. **Haiti** deserves better from the world. The cry of our brothers and sisters, who were the first people to win their struggle for freedom from colonial tyranny, has reached our ears and touched our hearts.
21. Doing nothing, in the face of the historic isolation, neglect and betrayal of the people of **Haiti**, is out of the question. Inaction is no longer an option. As we mobilise to show up for **Ukraine**, and countries that have experienced the devastating impact of climate shocks **including Libya, Morocco and Hawaii**, we must not leave Haiti behind.
22. We must commit to show up in the spirit of solidarity to support a people regain their **political** and **socioeconomic** footing, by reinforcing the underlying enabler: **security**. Kenya is ready to play its part in full, and jointly with a coalition of other nations of goodwill, as a great friend and true sibling of **Haiti**.
23. We urge the United Nations to urgently deliver an appropriate framework to facilitate the deployment of Multinational Security Support as part of a holistic response to Haiti's challenges.

24. We call on the Security Council to contribute positively by approving a resolution under Chapter Seven that tailors the security support mission to the specific needs of Haiti and its people. This should be part of a comprehensive strategy that includes delivering humanitarian aid, supporting livelihoods, instituting reforms, and fostering a political process guided and owned by Haitians, all with the aim of enabling free and fair elections within a reasonable timeframe. We are encouraged by many countries which have already stepped forward to take part in this solidarity.
25. We must recognise that stability, peace and security form the foundation on which the pursuit and realisation of sustainable development and climate action stands. This realisation must enable us formulate strategies which treat these initiatives as interconnected, mutually reinforcing and complementary dimensions of a single agenda.
26. The tragic spectacle of young people from Africa boarding rickety contraptions to gamble their lives away on dangerous voyages in pursuit of opportunities abroad, as conflict, climate and economic refugees, is a testament of the failures of the global economic system. At the recently concluded **Africa Climate Summit** in Nairobi, we undertook to begin the journey to course-correct and execute a paradigm shift in our pursuit for development and climate action.
27. First, we recognise that both climate action and sustainable development goals must be pursued simultaneously with greater resolve, urgency and ambition. No meaningful development can take place in countries that are also struggling with climate shocks and yet, at the same time, the frequency of climate emergencies impedes any meaningful development.
28. As a defining outcome of the **Africa Climate Summit**, we committed Africa to consider the dual problems through an opportunity lens, and deliver effective solutions by pursuing a fresh trajectory.
29. Development is a basic necessity for every society; it must happen one way or another. There should be no doubt about that. Annually 30 million young people need jobs, and many more need food. Half of our continent is in the dark- without access to electricity in 2023, while hundreds of millions can only cook using biomass. This is why the commitment of African nations in the **Nairobi Declaration** is radical and transformative: development is a fundamental imperative and green growth is the only sustainable way to achieve it.
30. From our standpoint, there is no need to be trapped in a false choice: **sustainable development is robust climate action and climate action is development.**
31. Africa's potential is defined by abundant and diverse resources, ranging from a youthful, highly skilled and motivated population, immense renewable energy potential and mineral resources, including critical minerals, and extensive natural capital endowment, including 60% of the world's unutilised arable land.

32. Capital and technology can find no better returns anywhere, than the tremendous investment opportunity in Africa's potential. Such investment would drive **green growth** creating jobs and wealth while decarbonising global production and consumption.
33. Further, the investments would also connect over 600 million people to **clean electricity**, provide **clean cooking** to about a billion people, finance **green manufacturing** including **e-mobility**, transform African **agriculture** and food systems including the manufacture of **green fertiliser**, process vast tonnage of the steel, aluminium and lithium required by new green industries, and enable our young people find the livelihoods they desire, at home, and reverse the tide of migration in the opposite direction.
34. To unlock financing at scale and create incentives for investments at scale in **green opportunities**, the Nairobi Declaration makes the reform of the international financial system a priority.
35. No meaningful climate action or development can take place in conditions of financial distress. According to **IMF** data as of last month, 10 low-income countries were in debt distress, and 52 are at high and moderate risk of falling into distress.
36. The 3.3 billion people in these counties are trapped in a vicious cycle of emergency responses, reconstruction, and recovery from more frequent climate shocks, which diverts resources away from both development and climate action and sucking vulnerable countries into a downward spiral of debt and environmental stress.
37. The global community must therefore develop a debt restructuring initiative that does not wait for nations to plunge over the cliff before providing relief. Rather, the new sovereign debt architecture should extend the tenor of sovereign debt and provide a 10-year grace period.
38. The second financing intervention relates to concessional financing. It is time to support international financial institutions to provide more concessional loans to the tune of \$500 billion and to provide increased liquidity support through Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with a minimum target of \$650 billion. Access should be based on specific needs, not entitlement, and this necessitates changes to the allocation mechanism.

39. The third critical reform is that of the financial market re-organisation. The entire system of risk assessment and the opaque methodologies employed by credit rating agencies and risk analysis needs to be overhauled. We must all recall the miscalculation of subprime mortgage risk by these agencies two decades ago, which precipitated a financial crisis whose effects reverberate to date, and ask the following question: On what basis should we believe that their methodologies are better at assessing risks in faraway frontier markets that are far more difficult to measure objectively, than in assessing the value of financial assets in the markets where they actually operate, and which they got so disastrously wrong?
40. In any case, any objective rating must also take into account principles of responsible sovereign lending and accounting, specifically emphasizing the need for international accounting systems that supports the proper valuation of mineral wealth, natural capital and ecosystem services, in the computation of national GDPs.
41. The fourth limb of the interventions arising out of the Nairobi Declaration is the establishment of a global public climate financing mechanism, funded through a global carbon tax on trade in fossil fuels, as well as an emissions levy on aviation and maritime transport, including the option of a global financial transactions tax, in order to make available, dedicated, affordable and accessible capital, for green investments at scale.
42. The roadmap to this new and urgently needed institutional infrastructure involves sustained engagement of various multilateral processes, and the instrument to actualise it by 2025 shall be a new global climate finance charter to be negotiated through the UNGA, COP and associated processes.
43. We understand the facts about our collective situation as a global community and as members of the United Nations family. We know the magnitude of our shared challenges and common threats. We appreciate that multilateralism is on trial, and our task is to defend it. We also recognise that multilateralism is broken, and it is our responsibility to repair it.
44. From this moment to **2030** and from our problems to their solutions, we are connected by a coherent **agenda** of robust collective **action**. We must therefore muster the courage and will, to stand together in **solidarity** and act: to right **past** wrongs, solve **present** problems and secure the **future**. To protect and empower all people and support our friends in need. To restore broken trust, raise hope high and keep faith strong and, finally, to pursue, achieve and sustain positive change in order to make billions of cherished dreams come true.
45. We must start right away, for we have no time to lose.

I thank you.

Please check against delivery