

13

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



STATEMENT BY H.E. JAKAYA MRISHO
KIKWETE, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA AND
CHAIRMAN OF AFRICAN UNION, AT THE
63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEWYORK,

23rd SEPTEMBER, 2008

Check Against Delivery

STATEMENT BY H.E.JAKAYA MRISHO KIKWETE, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AT THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NEWYORK,
23RD SEPTEMBER, 2008

Your Excellency Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the United Nations General Assembly;

Your Excellency Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations;

Excellencies Heads of State and Government;

Distinguished Representatives and Heads of Delegations;

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. President,

Allow me at the very outset to convey my warm regards and congratulations to you for your well deserved election to preside over the 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

On behalf of the African Union, United Republic of Tanzania and on my own behalf, I would like to assure you of our unqualified support and cooperation throughout your term of office. Allow me also to use this opportunity to thank and congratulate your predecessor Amb. Dr. Srgjan Kerim, President of the 62nd Session of this Assembly, for his leadership and for a job very well done.

Mr. President;

Our illustrious Secretary General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon deserves special tribute from us for the excellent manner in which he is discharging the responsibilities of this high office. We appreciate the way in which he has answered to the call of duty. My delegation and I, would like to reaffirm our support to his great work. His devotion for achieving the objectives of the MDGs and reversing the impacts of climate change and his concern for Africa's development has won the hearts of many of us on the African continent. We thank you, Mr. Secretary General, for your commitment and leadership.

Political and Security Situation in Africa

Mr. President,

As I stand before this august assembly in my dual capacities as Chairman of the African Union and as President of the United Republic of Tanzania, I bring with me a message of hope

and optimism from Africa. Africa is no longer the hopeless case as perceived by some. There are so many good things happening on the continent. There is increasing political stability, peace reigns in almost all nations except a few and economies of many nations are blossoming.

Africa is now a continent in full embrace of democracy, good governance, rule of law and respect for human rights. There is stronger commitment to deal with vices in society including corruption. Most African countries have embraced democratic governance and regular periodic elections. In the past two years, a good number of African countries have successfully held democratic elections. It is a matter of principle enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union that leaders who come into office through undemocratic means are not allowed to participate in the activities of the African Union.

Mr. President;

Except for the problems in Kenya and Zimbabwe, the elections in the other countries were peaceful and people were afforded the opportunity and freedom to choose leaders of their choice. It is heartwarming, indeed, that Africans, through the African Union and their regional economic organizations, have been proactive and have taken the lead in monitoring elections and resolving conflicts where they arose. This was the case with Kenya and very recently with Zimbabwe. Indeed, Africa has come of age. The old principle of non-interference in internal affairs is surely being replaced by non-indifference to violations of democracy and abuse of human rights.

Mr. President;

There are fewer conflicts in the continent today than it was the case a few years ago. This is testimony to the fact that democracy and good governance are taking root, and the African peace and security architecture is working. However, much more needs to be done to strengthen African Union's capacity for early warning, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. There is also need to do the same with the regional economic groupings to buttress their peace building efforts.

I would like to recognize the United Nations, the European Union and nations and other institutions in the world which have generously supported strengthening of the infant AU peace and security mechanism. I would like to call on all of them to continue supporting the AU mechanism as well as the regional mechanisms and peacekeeping operations.

Status of Peace and Security in Africa

Mr. President,

There are only three conflict situations worth mentioning and discussing at this august Assembly today. These conflicts are in Darfur, Somalia and Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Darfur

In Darfur, the humanitarian crisis still persists although there may be some encouraging signs of improvement. I believe the situation would be much better if the entire contingent of the UNAMID forces is deployed, and the peace talks between the rebels and the Government of Sudan are resumed and concluded. Also, if the humanitarian aid work would be allowed to be carried out unencumbered and matters related to justice are dealt with judiciously.

There is need therefore for the United Nations, the African Union and the government of Sudan to continue to work together expeditiously to remove the obstacles impeding the deployment of UNAMID, the dialogue between the government of Sudan and the rebels, operations of humanitarian work and the process of dispensation of justice. I was in Sudan two weeks ago and held fruitful discussions with His Excellency President Omar Al-Bashir and other senior officials of the Sudanese government. I also met officials of the joint UN-AU Mission in Darfur. We discussed the situation in Darfur, the obstacles involved and came to some understanding on the way forward. I am hopeful that progress can be made. We need to seize the moment and the opportunities unfolding.

Mr. President;

It is the considered view of the African Union that the indictment of President Omar Al-Bashir at this particular point in time will complicate the deployment of UNAMID and the management of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. It is for this reason that the African Union sees deferment as the most expedient thing to do now. Let me make one thing clear that when we talk about deferment, we should not in anyway be perceived as condoning impunity. Justice is a matter of essence. We are simply concerned with the best possible sequencing so that the most immediate matters of saving lives and easing the suffering of the people of Darfur are dealt with first. Getting the support and cooperation of the government of Sudan is a matter of essence.

Somalia

Mr. President;

The conflict in Somalia remains difficult to manage and resolve. The inter-party dialogue has not yet borne the desired results. The African Union peacekeeping efforts seem to be overstretched. We call upon the United Nations to step in and take over the peace keeping responsibilities at the earliest possible time before the African Union mission is overwhelmed. Time is of essence. Let me use this opportunity to commend the government of Ethiopia, Uganda and Burundi for their invaluable contribution to peacekeeping in Somalia.

Eastern DRC

Mr. President,

The volatile security situation in the Eastern DRC is a matter of great concern. We are deeply saddened by the ongoing fighting between the government forces and rebel forces of General Laurent Nkunda. The continued presence of negative forces threatening the security of countries neighboring DRC is a complicating factor. The African Union is committed to be more proactive in the search for lasting peace in this troubled region. We will work with regional leaders and the United Nations in this regard.

Zimbabwe

Mr. President,

On September 15, 2008, a landmark breakthrough was achieved in the Zimbabwe political crisis when the three parties to the conflict: ZANU-PF, MDC-T and MDC-M signed the historic agreement for ending the conflict and forming an inclusive government. The leaders of these three parties are now engaged in the process of implementing this agreement. Getting to this point in a conflict situation that looked impossible to resolve is a major achievement, indeed.

We need to congratulate H.E. President Robert Mugabe, Prime Minister Hon. Morgan Tsvangirai, and Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Arthur Mutambara for their statesmanship. We also need to recognize and commend, in a special way, President Thabo Mbeki of the Republic of South Africa for his sterling leadership. It is his patience, perseverance and understanding which made it all happen. His imminent departure, which comes suddenly, raises some concerns about what would happen if difficulties are experienced with the implementation of the Agreement. No cause for alarm, the South African government remains, and the new leadership will continue to be seized of the matter. Moreover, since this Agreement is the product of the decision taken by

the AU at its Summit in Sharm Al-Sheikh, Egypt on 1-2 July 2008, the AU and SADC stands ready to assist, if need would arise.

Global Food and Oil Prices Increase

Mr. President

We in Africa thank you for including the food and oil crises among the themes for this General Assembly. The current global escalation of food and fuel prices has reached a crisis proportion. Sub-Saharan Africa is the region affected the most. This is home to the majority of the Least Developed countries on this planet. Their food and oil bills have increased exponentially. Food import bills have increased by over 40 percent over the last year while oil prices have increased by over 100 percent since 2005. Even the recent drop in oil prices has not helped much because prices are more than twice they were in 2005.

Mr. President;

The high food and oil prices threaten to erode the humble gains made in implementing the MDGs and sustaining macroeconomic stability in Africa. In recent weeks, oil prices have declined but they are still far too high. The food and oil crisis coupled with the worsening crisis in the financial markets, gives us every reason to be very worried. The need for comprehensive action to reverse the situation cannot be overemphasized. We call upon the international community and key players in global economy to act quickly. The United Nations should take the lead.

Africa's Development Needs

Mr. President,

Yesterday, this Assembly held a High-Level Event on Africa's Development Needs. The meeting received a comprehensive report from the Secretary-General on "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward". We are glad to note that the report incorporated some of the recommendations of the MDG Africa Steering Group report of June 2008.

The report's findings underscore the fact that Africa cannot meet its development needs without the support of the international community. Indeed, the international community has been responding favorably. A number of commitments to assist Africa in this regard have been

made over the years at different international fora. Unfortunately, the commitments made are not being met fully.

We appeal to the General Assembly to echo the call and impress upon Africa's development partners to keep the promise and deliver on their commitments. I also urge this family of United Nations member states to fully support the political declaration adopted at the High Level Meeting yesterday as we rededicate ourselves to meeting the development needs of Africa.

Reform of the United Nations

Mr. President,

We in Africa have been following with keen interest the ongoing process of the reforms of the United Nations. We remain convinced to the ideal that reform of the United Nations would be incomplete without the reform of the Security Council. On the part of Africa, we have authorized our Permanent Representatives in New York to embark on negotiations with all parties on the reforms of the Security Council. At this juncture, I should reiterate the position of the African Union of asking for two permanent seats with a veto and two more Non-Permanent seats. Our demand should be seen against the reality that Africa is the only continent without a permanent seat in the Security Council despite our large membership to the United Nations. The reform of the Security Council, therefore, should take this into account.

System Wide Coherence: Implementation of One UN Pilots

Mr. President

The reforms of the United Nations have, on the other hand, to entail making the organization work better and be more efficient, effective and responsive to the challenges of our times. We are happy with the work of previous General Assemblies on advancing UN System Wide Coherence. The work has advanced inter-governmental consultations on the UN delivering as one: One budget, one programme and one office.

Tanzania is one of the eight pilot countries on the United Nations delivering as one. Our experience so far has shown that delivering as one is possible. It improves national ownership and strengthens national leadership in the development process. It permits realignment of the UN assistance with national priorities and streamlines business transactions thus enhancing efficiency and the effectiveness of UN's activities. I urge this Assembly to endorse and appeal to our developing partners to support fully this reform initiative.

The Helsinki Process

Mr. President,

At the 60th session of this august Assembly, I reported on the work of the Helsinki Process on Globalization and Democracy, a joint initiative launched in 2003 and co-chaired by Finland and Tanzania.

The Helsinki Process, as a forum to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue on the possibilities offered and challenges posed by the process of globalization, has come to an end. The main objective of this initiative has been to mobilize political will in support of the Millennium Development Goals. The President of Finland H.E. Tarja Halonen and I, as Co-Chairs of the Process, would be glad to present the final report to the UN Secretary General this week. We trust this report will add value to global efforts to mobilize political will in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Western Sahara

Mr. President,

Before I conclude allow me to mention two things: One to remind this world body that the Saharawi problem remains unresolved. May I make a humble appeal to the UN Security Council to expedite the process so that the matter is concluded and the people of Western Sahara are given the opportunity to determine which way to go. They deserve to be afforded the opportunity to live a normal life.

The second is a matter with regard to universal jurisdiction being practiced by some European nations. It has now become a matter of harassment for African leaders. We discussed the matter at the last African Union Summit and we intend to raise this issue with the United Nations for appropriate action.

Conclusion

Mr. President,

Once again, I would like to reiterate African Union's and Tanzania's support to your efforts in fulfilling our collective objectives during this 63rd Session of the General Assembly

I thank you for your kind attention!