

GHANA



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STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

MR. JOHN AGYEKUM KUFUOR
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA

AT THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING
OF THE 60th SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2005
NEW YORK

Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I wish to join previous speakers to congratulate the UN on its 60th anniversary. I salute the Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan, and his team under whose auspices we are marking this happy occasion.

The UN's achievements over the past 60 years are phenomenal and span several areas of human endeavour. This is remarkable, given the problems it has encountered since its inception. It is also a testimony to the able and committed leadership which the organisation has enjoyed over the years.

Five years ago, the dawn of the new Millennium generated new hope for a better future of peace and prosperity for humankind. The Millennium Development Goals, which were unanimously endorsed here, raised expectations further.

However, after five years, and in spite of the emphasis put on the special needs of Africa as well as its efforts under the NEPAD initiative, very little has been achieved on our continent.

Africa, therefore, welcomes the recommendations put up by the UN Millennium Project for realistic programmes toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as the range of actions which its development partners intend to undertake to support the continent's efforts at sustainable development.

Mr. President, the recent cancellation by the G8 of the debt of some HIPC countries is particularly commendable and welcome. It is hoped that this concession will soon be extended to all African countries.

An open and equitable international trading system is indispensable for sustainable growth and development. **We, therefore, need to** accelerate efforts at achieving the objectives of the Doha Round. The establishment of a trading system, which encourages fair competition and

equally fair returns on investment, would invariably minimise dependence of developing countries on aid and other assistance and ensure a steady reversal of their economic marginalization. **The full integration of the economies of the developing world into the global economy demands in the transition that the enterprises and companies of that world are assisted to become more competitive and efficient. It is in recognition of this important fact that Ghana welcomes warmly and commends to the international community the excellent initiative of the U.S. Government, the Millennium Challenge Account and proposals, such as the creation of an international finance facility, which seek to mobilise substantial additional resources to assist the developing world, especially Africa, during the transitional process.**

Mr. President, terrorism has emerged as one of the most serious threats to peace and security in today's world. The fight against it calls for a sustained, firm and strong collective response from the international community.

Ghana believes that the various challenges confronting international peace and security require a new paradigm of security consensus,

premised on concerted and multilateral action. Consequently, we urge that this occasion be used to reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism which underpins the spirit and letter of the UN Charter.

The scourge of war would not end unless the issues of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation as well as the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons are addressed. In some societies, especially in Africa, these latter constitute the weapons of mass destruction. It needs to be stressed that, over the past decade alone, the use of such weapons has claimed more than 20 million victims in Africa, many of whom were women and children.

Mr. President, through its peacekeeping operations around the world, the UN, has brought relief and hope to victims in conflict areas. I am glad to note the contribution made by my country Ghana to this noble UN activity.

Given the ever increasing complexities of such Operations, we welcome the proposed establishment of a Peace building Commission to help conflict afflicted countries in the transition from war to peace and national reconstruction.

At this juncture, it is important to recall our collective commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights as expressed in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We, in Ghana, believe that it is only in a democratic system that these rights can be fully realized. We, therefore, fully support the decision to establish a Democracy Fund to promote democratic practice and good governance.

We also support the proposal to convert the Human Rights Commission into a Human Rights Council, with the hope that such measures will enhance the effectiveness of its work in protecting and promoting human rights.

Mr. President, as we look to the UN to lead the way in meeting our collective aspirations, we must also accept that the challenges of the new millennium are daunting, and that the UN must undergo substantial reforms to be able to discharge its mandate.

Appropriately, the Secretary-General has already taken the initiative to appoint a High-Level Panel to study the challenges of the

contemporary world and suggest how the UN should confront them. By now we have all seen the document entitled "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All", which is the Secretary-General's reaction to the Report of the Panel.

Mr. President, this is the moment to strengthen UN institutions. The General Assembly needs to be revitalised to enable it to assume fully its rightful place as the most representative and deliberative organ of the UN. The need for a more, vibrant ECOSOC, an efficient Secretariat and adequate funding cannot be over-emphasised for a stronger United Nations.

Above all, the Security Council must be re-structured and expanded to reflect the increased membership of the UN and also enable it carry out its Charter obligations more effectively with the full confidence of member states. This reform must be based on the principles of democracy, sovereign equality of states and equitable geographical representation among others.

In this regard, we reiterate the African Union's position, as spelt out in the Ezulwini Consensus,

on all aspects of the reform of the Security Council, especially its claim for two permanent seats.

Africa remains the only continent without representation in the permanent membership of the Security Council. This does not reflect the equitable aspirations espoused in the spirit of the organisation today.

In conclusion, Mr. President, history stands ready to judge us on the outcome of this meeting. **We cannot and should not fail** succeeding generations. We therefore welcome the outcome of the document submitted for our consideration and will support a mechanism for its implementation.

I thank you.