



STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF

THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,

COMRADE R.G. MUGABE,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 63RD SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

NEW YORK, 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2008.

especially on the most vulnerable in society such as women, children, the elderly, as well as people living with HIV and AIDS. The crisis now qualifies as a humanitarian emergency which requires global solidarity to provide post haste assistance in the form of food, water and energy.

Mr President,

For most developing countries, the crisis is competing with other pressing demands for scarce resources for development, including achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially as we are faced with declining Official Development Assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment. The trend will, regrettably, reverse some of the progress made towards the attainment of the MDGs. It is therefore crucial that national efforts aimed at addressing these global food and energy crises be complemented by appropriate international assistance and interventions, including debt cancellation for low-income food-deficient developing countries so as to release more resources to fight hunger. Adequate support for food production programmes is absolutely necessary.

We call for more research into better seed varieties and assistance in irrigation technology and improved water harvesting methods, necessary to mitigate the effects of climate change on agriculture. Zimbabwe believes that the challenges of climate change should be addressed in the context of development programmes that recognize the three pillars of economic and social thrusts as well as environmental protection.

Mr President,

In the past year, Zimbabwe is proud to have played her modest part in promoting sustainable development through its chairmanship of the 16th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD16). The Session which examined the obstacles and barriers to development in the areas of agriculture, land use, and rural development, and to drought mitigatory measures and desertification prevention in Africa. My Government, which was an active participant at the International Conference on the global food crisis, under the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome, in June this year, will continue to play its active role in formulating policy recommendations on this subject of sustainable development targets.

Mr President,

We share the view that trade is an important tool for development and so we reiterate our call for an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trading and financial system, that seeks the removal of the main trade barriers. Tariffs have unfortunately remained high on goods from developing economies such as textiles and farm products. It is therefore disturbing that the Doha Round negotiations have collapsed without any indication of when they will be reconvened.

Mr President,

The objectives of the U.N. Charter in the economic arena will remain unfulfilled unless all member states genuinely and seriously participate in efforts to redress challenges that persist in developing countries. Social justice, political stability and sustainable development in most developing countries can best be achieved through genuine and committed support for empowerment programmes through, *inter alia*, just land ownership patterns. We understand only too well in our context that sustainable development is not possible without agrarian reform.

My Government has therefore gone a long way in laying the foundation for sustainable food production through its Land Reform Programme. The majority of our rural people have been empowered to contribute to household and national food security and, indeed, to be masters of their own destiny. However, the effects of climate change that have included recurrent droughts and floods in the past seven years, and the illegal, unilaterally-imposed sanctions on my country have hindered Zimbabwe's efforts to increase food production. Once again, I appeal to the world's collective conscience to apply pressure for the immediate removal of these sanctions by Britain, the United States and their allies, which have brought untold suffering to our people.

Mr President,

Zimbabwe has always been and continues to be a firm believer in multilateral approaches to solving disputes as opposed to the unilateralism favoured by some countries. Our experience has shown that the cooperative and pacific approach often leads to lasting solutions to conflicts. We therefore deplore the vindictive approach which often is characterized by self-righteous finger-pointing, double standards and the imposition of unilateral sanctions to coerce smaller and weaker countries to bow to the wishes of militarily stronger states.

In addition, the unilateral and coercive economic measures, that we have witnessed in recent years, are again completely at cross purposes with the principles that guide international co-operation as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr President,

Not long ago, some permanent members of the Security Council sought to invoke Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter so its weight of sanctions and other measures could be applied against my small country which by any stretch of imagination is no threat to international peace and security. What insanity is this that has afflicted some world leaders? Should the sacred document, the U.N. Charter be allowed to suffer such undeserved emasculation and disgraceful abuse? And where is the protection of the small and innocent countries like mine from the threatened and real acts of aggression and punitive acts, often based on completely false allegations of violations of the rule of law, democracy or human rights? By the way, those who falsely accuse us of these violations are themselves international perpetrators of genocide, acts of aggression and mass destruction.

Mr President,

The masses of innocent men, women and children who have perished in their thousands in Iraq surely demand retribution and vengeance. Who shall heed their cry? Surely those who invaded Iraq under false pretences and on the strength of contrived lies and in blatant violation of the Charter and international law must be made liable for them!

Zimbabwe does derive solace from the fact that there are some permanent members of the Security Council who have taken principled stands in defending the Charter and protecting our sovereignty by ensuring that the Security Council acts not only within its mandate but also impartially, objectively and justly. Indeed, their sense of justice ensured that Zimbabwe, a country that does not pose any threat to regional and international peace, did not fall prey to a cocktail of lies which had been designed by our detractors to call for U.N. sanctions against it under Chapter VII. We thank them for their stand for truth and objectivity!

Mr President,

While we recognize the important role of the offices of the Secretary General in assisting member states to resolve political and other problems, we are of the view that international civil servants should discharge their noble duties with sensitivity and neutrality. At no time should they seek to pander to the whims of the mighty against the weak. Similarly, we call on some Security Council members to desist from abusing the U.N. Secretariat in an attempt to promote their political interests. It is our firm belief that the Secretary General and his staff should be allowed to serve all member states without fear or favour.

Mr President,

We reiterate our long held view that the Security Council as presently constituted is undemocratic. The present configuration renders it subject to manipulation by the powerful countries that use the Council as a readily available legitimizing forum for their political machinations. Thus it is imperative that the Security Council be democratized by ensuring equitable geographical representation through increasing its membership. Zimbabwe remains steadfast in its support of the Ezulwini Consensus which calls for Africa to have two permanent seats with the same powers and prerogatives as the current permanent members and two non permanent seats.

Mr President,

We share the view that the General Assembly, a body that represents all of us and enjoys the wider representation of States, must continue to be the supreme decision-making body of the U.N. We call for its revitalization to make it more effective and to enable it to fully discharge its Charter mandate. It is our fervent hope that a revitalized General Assembly will reassert its prestige, its pre-eminent role, its authority and its capacity to guide and direct other organs of the U.N. system. In that context, the tendency by some members of the Security Council to usurp the power and mandates of the General Assembly must be resisted.

Mr President,

I am pleased to report that the inter-party talks in Zimbabwe, for which our regional grouping, SADC, appointed a facilitator, ended with the signing of an agreement on the formation of an all-inclusive government on 15th September 2008. This was achieved entirely by African mediation, which is clear testimony that Africa is capable of solving her challenges and problems which are often the remnants of colonialism. African leaders, working together, were able to find an African solution to an African problem. In that regard, I wish to pay special tribute to President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, whose patience, fortitude, sensitivity, diplomatic skills and painstaking work made it possible for the Zimbabwean parties to overcome what had appeared to be insurmountable and intractable difficulties to reaching agreement.

I would like to extend my thanks to SADC, the African Union and individual African and other leaders, who lent their support to this initiative. My Party, ZANU (PF), will abide by the spirit and letter of the agreement to which we have appended our signature. As government, we are prepared to cooperate with all countries which also respect Zimbabwe's sovereignty. I would therefore like to appeal to those members of the international community who have imposed illegal sanctions against Zimbabwe to lift them so that my country can focus, undisturbed, on its economic turn-around programme.

In conclusion, Mr President, we hope that we will continue to shape an organisation which upholds universal values and interests, which attends to the urgent needs of those in need and which remains at the service of humanity.

I thank you.

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