



Statement

by

His Excellency António Gumende
Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the
United Nations

at the General Debate of the
72nd Session of the United Nations General
Assembly

On the theme

*"Focusing on People:
Striving for peace and decent life for all
on a sustainable planet"*

New York, 25 September 2017

Mr. President
Mr. Secretary-General
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

I have the honour to address the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, on behalf of His Excellency Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, who could not attend this august gathering due to other commitments at home. Therefore, allow me to start by conveying President's Nyusi good wishes for a successful session of this highest forum for global political and diplomatic dialogue - the United Nations General Assembly.

I would like to seize this opportunity to join the speakers before me, in congratulating His Excellency Miroslav Lajčák, for his unanimous election to preside over the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I assure you, Mr. President, the full commitment of Mozambique to contribute towards the realization of the goals we all envisage for this important session. We trust that your crafted leadership and diplomatic experience will add value to our endeavours and contribute for the success of the work of this session.

I equally congratulate your predecessor, His Excellency Peter Thomson, of Fiji, for his stewardship and commitment to fulfil the agenda of last session of the General Assembly.

A special word of appreciation goes to His Excellency António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, for his vision and leadership displayed in this first year in office. We believe that he is steering our organization into the right path to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness as it serves us, member states, in our quest to deliver on the ambitious goals we have set for our peoples. Only a strong and vibrant UN system can ensure that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals will deliver societies that are more inclusive, peaceful and prosperous without compromising on the very existence of our planet.

Mr. President

Two years after we pledged our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, the world is confronted with multiple and complex challenges that threaten to:

- ✓ Constrain the gains we made in fostering global peace and stability,
- ✓ Stall and reverse the advances made in fostering social and economic wellbeing of our peoples; and
- ✓ Cause irreversible damages to our planet.

Therefore, we welcome the theme chosen for this session by the President of the General Assembly, "*Focusing on People: Fighting for Peace and a Decent Life for All on a Sustainable Planet*" as it allows this august body to timely reflect on how best to address the challenges before us.

This reflection at a multilateral forum like the General Assembly is essential if we are to coordinate and consolidate our approaches as we strive individually and collectively to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

The renewed *focus on people* should serve as a universal impetus of all the development actors to translate into practice, actions that promote peace and wellbeing of the entire humanity.

It is worth recalling that our resolve is to make the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a framework that brings together the collective will to transform people's lives in a sustainable way, by lifting them from poverty and promoting human dignity without neglecting peace as a critical factor for the attainment of sustainable development, based on the interplay of the economic, social and environmental pillars.

As we strive to accomplish these goals, we are challenged to find ways and means to honour the commitments undertaken in the Addis Ababa Agenda for Development Financing, in the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Only joint and complementary efforts in this three domains will enable us to build the necessary resilience at national, regional and international level commensurate to the challenges before us and in line with our aspiration of leaving no country behind.

Mr. President

The experiences we gained and the challenges we faced in the implementation of other globally agreed development goals in the past underline the need for a greater commitment of our development partners to scale-up and honour their assistance and for funding pledges made for climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation, as well as for disaster prevention efforts in developing countries. This support is of paramount importance to mitigate the effects of climate variability whose devastating effects have been laid bare in several member states of this august body in the last two months.

Furthermore, it also made clear that a robust and efficient UN system, as well as a steady partnership between the organization and the regional bodies can play a catalytic role in accelerating national development and strengthening democratic political systems and institutions that can lead to more inclusive and hence peaceful societies.

In this vein, we support the ongoing efforts to reform and reposition the UN development system, undertaken by the Secretary-General, in order to make it more responsive to the development needs of its member states.

Mr. President

The overwhelming challenges of our times require bold and determined political will to yield the results we seek. Mozambique reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development since focusing *on people* has always been at the core of Mozambique's national development agenda.

Therefore, we have aligned our national development agenda to include the three dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as reflected in the five pillars of the national Five Year Program namely:

- ✓ Consolidating national unity, peace and sovereignty;
- ✓ Developing human and social capital;
- ✓ Promoting employment, productivity and competitiveness;
- ✓ Developing economic and social infrastructures; and

- ✓ Ensuring sustainable and transparent management of natural resources and the environment.

Mozambique has created a multi-stakeholder National Reference Group which encompasses Government, Civil Society, Private Sector, and International Cooperation Partners for the management of the SDGs, and is promoting capacity building for its implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

In the effort to consolidate national unity, peace and sovereignty, our *focus on people* leads us to strive to ensure that lasting peace and stability is a reality to all Mozambicans. Thus, durable peace and stability ranks as an overarching priority in our national agenda, as it is a crucial factor for the development and for the promotion of lasting human security in its broadest sense.

Therefore, the Government of Mozambique, under the leadership of President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi strives for an inclusive dialogue with all political actors and the civil society through both formal and informal mechanism, including the Parliament. This inclusive approach is also used to engage all Mozambicans in the conceptualization and implementation of the national development agenda.

In addition, our *focus on people* also envisages not to leave anyone behind, one of the guiding precepts of our universal agenda. Therefore, particular attention is given to policies and strategies aimed at the protection and the full enjoyment of human rights, the promotion of gender equality and equity as well as the empowerment of women and youth who constitute the majority of our people.

Mr. President

Mozambique believes that our focus on people, peace, decent life and sustainable planet also requires a regional dimension, particularly in the context of a globalized world. Hence, we are encouraged by the contributions that regional and international multilateral mechanisms have had to prevent and manage conflicts and to promote peace and stability, in particular those under Southern African Development Community, the African Union and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, to which we are proud to belong to.

We believe that mechanisms that promote peace and prosperity should also constitute a strong platform of action aimed at fostering dialogue among civilizations, an unquestionable tool in the promotion of a culture of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and sustainable world. We pledge to continue to play our role in these endeavours.

Mr. President

Our resolve to *focus on people* entails that we address with a sense of urgency the root causes of the increase on unregulated migration and massive flows of refugees, two dimensions of the human crises that we are confronted with in modern times.

This regrettable reality is in great part a consequence of a succession of unresolved crisis or poorly settled conflict situations in relation to which the international community bears a responsibility.

In this connection, we risk achieving an ineffective and fragile peace if the international community remains focused on short term and ad hoc measures which leave scope for the recurrence of the same intractable problems at a later stage.

The international community should come together, to redouble efforts and to build consensus to prevent the senseless loss of lives. We need to adopt measures to reduce people's vulnerabilities, complemented by actions that address the complex and structural causes of these mass movements such as conflicts and political, social and economic exclusion.

Focus on people on a sustainable planet also requires an urgent attention to climate change. Today more than ever before the challenges posed by the adverse impact of climate change are noticeable. Every day we are confronted by the destructive impact of climate change, challenging those who continue to harbour doubts about the effects of human activities on the environment and the climate.

The recent devastating effects of the hurricanes, the mudslides and the earthquake that affected millions of people in the Caribbean region, the United States of America, Sierra Leon and Mexico are a vivid reminder of the scale of the natural disaster threats we face. I would like to seize this opportunity to convey to the affected people and countries, a message of solidarity and sympathy, on behalf of the people and the government of Mozambique.

The great human losses and the destruction of infrastructures as a result of the scale and ferocity of the storms prove, once again, that beyond our convictions we need to reflect and to act as a common front, to face the menaces arising from climatic change. To this end, we reaffirm the importance of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as an instrument to strengthen the much needed partnerships for adaptation and mitigation measures.

Mr. President

The positive dynamics generated by the major development commitments made by the international community in 2015 have been overshadowed by the worrying signs of the eruption of political instability, the prevailing inter and intra-states conflicts, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, the rising tensions in the Korean Peninsula, as well as by the recurrence of acts of terrorism and of violent extremism.

These challenges to peace and stability threaten to reverse the development gains registered over the recent decades and to hinder our development efforts as we chart the way forward.

Therefore, it is our hope that the ongoing peace initiatives as well as the measures to curb the recruitment and finance of terrorist groups result in opportunities to further promote peace and development, as well as to strengthen human rights and to build more inclusive societies.

Only through constructive dialogue and peaceful means and solutions we can secure durable peace and stability in our world. To this endeavour, we would like to emphasise the importance of strong democratic institutions at national level, the impacts of regional cooperation and the role of the United Nations.

Mr. President

As we gathered in this great hall, the world is once again facing the threat of the dangers posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons that have become the most dangerous existential threat that humanity faces in the 21st Century.

As a country with a Constitution that values the principle of universal disarmament of all states and the negotiated solutions of international conflicts, as well as the peaceful use of nuclear energy, Mozambique notes with great concern the escalation of tension and the risk of nuclear confrontation that is unfolding in the Korean Peninsula. The catastrophic impact of a nuclear conflict demands a more restrained approach based on dialogue, skilful diplomacy and the political will to de-escalate and to fully comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions. More than anything, the resolutions signal our collective disapproval of the course of events in that part of the world.

The lack of progress in the decolonization of Western Sahara, the sole African country still to exercise the right to self-determination continues to be a cause for grave concern to Mozambique. Regrettably, all the efforts deployed by the United Nations, the African Union and other actors to bring about an accepted settlement aiming to grant the people of Western Sahara their inalienable right to self-determination and independence has not yielded results.

We would like to seize this opportunity to call upon the Security Council, the General Assembly and the international community to exercise their responsibility by implementing their own resolutions, particularly regarding the principle of self-determination and right of freedom, as well as to support the African Union and its Special Envoy to Western Sahara, Mr. Joaquim Chissano, former President of Mozambique.

The principle of self-determination and right of freedom should also be a reality for the Palestinian people. To this end, it is imperative that the relevant UN Security Council resolutions are implemented. We believe that the solution relies in the two states principle, Palestine and Israel coexisting side by side, in peace and security.

Mozambique followed with interest the efforts of Cuba and the United States of America to stabilise the diplomatic relations between these two neighbouring countries, an important step towards the normalisation of bilateral relations and to bring to an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. In this context, we note with concern the latest developments and appeal to the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo for it hinders the socio-economic development of Cuba and the Cuban people. Therefore, Mozambique, once again, associates itself with the overwhelming majority of countries in this hall to demand the immediate termination of this unilateral coercive measure.

Mr. President

We live in a world confronted by challenges that demand global responses. The relevance of the UN, the lodestar of multilateralism, over the last 72 years of its existence has always rested in its ability to reform and re-invent itself to respond more suitably to the challenges of continuously changing world it serves.

Therefore, Mozambique supports the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts to reform the United Nations System to make it fit for purpose, and commends his demonstrated desire to fully consult and seek consent of the UN membership at each stage of the process.

In addition to the ongoing reforms, we also need to urgently accelerate the reform of the Security Council, another element that will contribute to reaffirm the role of the United Nations in the search for sustainable solutions for the peace and security challenges facing the humanity.

The difficulties stemming from the lack of consensus among members to initiate text-based negotiations to complete the reform of the Security Council constrain our ability to open a new window of opportunity that would enhance the credibility of the organ by making it more representative of the current reality.

The Security Council is one of the fundamental pillars for the success of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. President

I would like to conclude by reiterating the unconditional commitment of the Government of Mozambique to continue to engage, in partnership with the United Nations and fellow member states, in the search of sustainable solutions to the problems that affect the humanity.

History has shown us that humankind thrives when “we, the peoples” are able to share, collaborate, cooperate, dialogue and care.

The UN General Assembly will always be the platform where we come to recommit to rededicate ourselves to noble ideals on which this great organization was founded: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” and “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”. Let’s all stay loyal to these lofty ideals enshrined in the UN Charter and work together to transform our world.

Thank you very much!