

República Democrática



de S. Tomé e Príncipe

**Statement by His Excellency President Evaristo do Espírito Santo Carvalho at
the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

Mister President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

Excellency Mr Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Heads of State and Government

Excellencies, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and External Affairs

Distinguished delegates,

Excellencies,

It is with a great honor and satisfaction that I take the floor at the General Assembly, for the first time, as Head of State of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe. The 2016's elections, which elected me, witnessed once again, in an expressive and unequivocal way, the level of democracy in São Tomé and Príncipe and the regular functioning of its institutions.

At the outset, allow me to dedicate, with great pleasure, my first words to His Excellency Miroslav Lajčák, whom I congratulate on his election to the Presidency of the 72nd General Assembly of the United Nations, conveying our full support for his mandate and wishing that it will be very successful.

I would also like to congratulate the outgoing President, His Excellency Peter Thomson for the manner in which he conducted the work of the previous General Assembly, judiciously, with enthusiasm and unselfishness, in an international context that has posed serious challenges to our Organization.

I also take the opportunity of such noble audience to address Your Excellency the Secretary General António Guterres and congratulate you for your brilliant victory, insofar as your political clout is indisputable to lead

the United Nations and deal with the multiple global challenges, in the pursue of the necessary reform of the Organization, including its Security Council, and the efforts to promote peace, sustainable development and human rights.

Mr. President

The current challenges facing our peoples and countries, in the face of a complex international environment, forces us to deepen the guiding spirit that underscores the creation of our Organization, as the ultimate and global guarantor to seek for peaceful, lasting solutions, consensual and legitimized by international laws, so that we may attain the desired objectives of peace, security, stability and progress of all Humanity.

As such, this is a sovereign occasion, so that together we can continue our reflection, in order to strengthen the role of this Organization.

To that end, it is therefore urgent to carry out essential reforms that respond to the dynamics of today's globalized world, that is, to enable the different specialized agencies, that make up the United Nations, to act swiftly and effectively, in a process which is intended to be inclusive of all nations, as reflected in this important document, such as the Charter of San Francisco, signed on June 26, 1945.

On the other hand, we must reinforce the awareness for the need to implement mechanisms that allow for greater inclusion in decision-making and strategic planning, which are the guiding principles of international financial institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

We firmly believe that this is the only way for the economies of developing countries to be able to faster integrate the global development process, whose benefits are not yet fully reflected in our own countries, while allowing for the renewal and strengthening of the credibility of these institutions, which we consider to be of central importance to the functioning of the global financial system and to support our economic growth efforts aimed at the social and human development of our populations.

Mr. President

The theme proposed for this Session, "Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet" fits perfectly into the reality of the moment we live in and aligns with the challenges we face, in search of a better world.

Thus, because the primary focus of any national, regional or international policy is to prioritize the people and their yearnings for a better life, as well as the continuous improvement of the mechanisms needed to meet those goals.

The effort for world peace is urgent and encompasses fundamental values, which we are sure we all stand for and strive to achieve. The serious conflicts which trouble the world are a constant concern, and its harmful consequences for the well-being of humanity, for the balance of relations between our nations and for our economic, social and human development, cannot but be strongly condemned by all of us without exceptions.

The divisions we are now seeing are, in our view, the result of the lack of a sincere, comprehensive and thoughtful dialogue between all parties. It is not possible to accept that in the name of religious fanaticism, isolationism, populist rhetoric misplaced in our time, I would even say of selfishness in accepting and living with the differences of others, continue to result in so much discord, aggravating tensions and the curtailing of so many lives, among them those of our children who, well cared for, represent the real future of our planet.

Therefore we call for dialogue, emphasizing the central mediating role of our Organization, to cease the tensions on the Korean Peninsula. It is also necessary for weapons to cease in Syria, where people live permanently under the threat of bombs that have destroyed the country and torn its social fabric, while claiming so many innocent lives. There is also a need to accelerate the process of dialogue and concord in the Middle East, to which we once again make the strongest appeal from this podium to find a peaceful and negotiated solution respecting the right of the Palestinian people to conduct their own destiny, thus respecting the basic principles of the United Nations.

Similarly, there is an urgent need to find a solution at the negotiating table for the tensions in Ukraine, the Western Sahara issue and our brother country, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, whom we greet warmly and wish that their institutions regain a rapid and regular functioning.

Even though the recent Ministerial Meeting of the African Initiative for Peace and National Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, which took place in the Gabonese Republic on 17 July, has taken a step in the right direction, we have followed with great concern the deterioration of the security situation with incalculable humanitarian consequences, sadly pointing to a situation of genocide, thus our appeal goes for the need that efforts should be made to avoid another humanitarian disaster in that African country.

Mr. President

We cannot but deplore the terrorist acts that unfortunately keep on claiming out so many lives in the whole world. The barbarity and disrespect for the precious good that is human life, committed through these indescribable acts, appalling and inhumane, warrant our firmest and vehement condemnation.

In this regard, we underline the atrocities committed by Boko Haram group, among others, in our neighboring and sister country Nigeria, which has been leading to instability in the whole region and a severe slow-down to the implementation of sustainable development policies, with undeniable echo in the deterioration of the safety of the Gulf of Guinea, where maritime piracy acts and illegal activities associated with it have distressed our region.

The Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe as a pacific, democratic and open to dialogue State will always stand side by side with its regional and international partners in all the initiatives that aim at eradicating this phenomenon from our societies.

Mr. President

If, as the theme of this Session invokes us, we really want to create the conditions for people to lead decent lives, it is urgent to address the problem of migratory crises. Every day we are confronted with the tragedies that are afflicting thousands of people who, escaping conflicts and the conditions of misery that affect their countries, risk, in poor conditions, perishing in trips in precarious circumstances, in search of a better life. There shouldn't be any doubt that no one leaves their homeland, facing these risks, spontaneously.

There is a civic, ethical and moral responsibility to welcome these people, providing them with the indispensable humanitarian assistance, but also to create

the conditions for mitigating this phenomenon in the countries of origin. This involves the adoption of concerted policies for the reception of refugees, as well as to provide support for countries of origin, to evolve in an environment of peace and stability, providing the necessary conditions for their populations to take part in the life projects they choose.

We also underlined the important work of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, under the shared presidency of Germany and Morocco, which began in January of this year and will run until the end of 2018, whose contributions to the United Nations Global Compact for Migration, we are convinced, will lead to this much-desired policy of improved global migration, to be adopted by the community of States in 2018.

We also welcome the recent French initiative which brought together a European-Africa joint mini-summit held in Paris at the end of August, with the aim of finding ways to overcome Africa's significant migratory flow to Europe, which has transformed the Mediterranean Sea into an authentic cemetery.

I cannot fail to mention the Sustainable Development Goals, whose priorities go directly to the core of what we have been expressing. Eradication of poverty and hunger; the promotion of social and economic development; the protection of the rights of all, gender equality and the empowerment of women; combating climate change; access to quality services and special attention to vulnerable groups. If achieved, as we believe, then we will be able to see a positive evolution of the living conditions of our nations, so let us all work to that end.

In this regard, we highlight the efforts of the African Union, enshrined in the guidelines of the important and ambitious Agenda 2063, the implementation and success of which will contribute greatly to making these objectives more easily reachable. This is without a doubt an inclusive document, based on the cultural specificities of each country, which consciously demand from our governments a very clear commitment to its success.

Mr. President

As successful as we are at achieving the goals for peace, stability and progress on a world scale, none of this will make any sense if we do not know how to take care of our planet. Combating the phenomenon of climate change is perhaps the most complex objective for which all humanity is called upon to intervene. The

success of this fight is perhaps the greatest legacy we can leave to future generations.

In this context, the Paris Agreement is a historic and broad-based consensus on the challenges we face in this area and the financial and technological means to overcome them. However, the proposed measures are yet to be implemented. Every day we postpone this issue, more of our planet suffers. Increasingly extreme weather events cause irreparable damage to our ecosystem and life on Earth. I thus appeal to your political boldness, without prejudice to the understanding that each one should contribute according to the principles of common equity and responsibilities, while differentiated.

São Tomé and Príncipe, a small developing island state, has spared no effort in this regard and I want to assure you of our firm commitment to be at the forefront of implementing climate change mitigation measures.

However, it should be noted that, along with so many other countries, funding for such measures lacks the support of the international community. Cooperation Agreements should be established with ambitious funding for climate issues, as well as ensuring effective and efficient transfer of technology by the more developed countries.

As you know, our economy is extremely vulnerable, depending on almost 90% of Official Development Assistance. In a context of international financial containment, it becomes necessary to think and design alternative ways of addressing such complexity. It was with this in mind that the current government decided to implement an ambitious transforming agenda for the 2030 horizon, fundamentally aimed at changing the paradigm of growth and economic and social development policies in São Tomé and Príncipe, with a strategic focus on the private sector of our economy. This new strategic direction, in what concerns its guidelines, is in perfect harmony with the aspirations of both the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063.

We hold the belief and have the ambition of its success, but we will not be able to do it without the strong support of our traditional partners as well as the international community.

In this regard, I would like to remind you that, based on the principle of recognition of "One China", the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe re-established, at the end of last year, diplomatic ties with the

People's Republic of China, which, we are certain, will contribute to the strengthening of the family of the strategic partners with which we intend to follow the difficult paths of development that we have proposed through our Transformation Agenda by the year 2030.

In supporting also the development efforts of Cuba's friendly people, we wish to renew our call for the efforts to the normalization of their relations with the United States of America so that as soon as possible we can watch the lifting of the embargo which has for decades been an obstacle to the country's progress.

Mr. President

In the era of the proliferation of technological means at the disposal of mankind, our societies, ever more attentive and informed, demand a renewed effort in the accomplishment of the noble mission of our Organization.

Let us therefore seek inspiration in its founding principles, in the quest for the peaceful resolution of conflicts; in humanitarian support to all those who need it; in the promotion of inclusive and constructive dialogue; in the protection of our ecosystem and in the promotion and guarantee of Human Rights, so necessary for the harmonious development of our nations.

The Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe will continue to fight for such ideals, joining forces and willpowers for its materialization.

Thank you for your attention