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STATEMENT

BY

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ON

***“REAFFIRMING THE CENTRAL ROLE OF
THE UNITED NATIONS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE”***

***65TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK
SEPTEMBER 24, 2010***

President of the General Assembly,
Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I did not attend the Summit on MDGs. Nevertheless, I would like to inform the Assembly that Uganda will definitely achieve the following MDGS: *Goal 1* – Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; *Goal 2* - Achieving universal primary education; *Goal 3* – Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women; *Goal 7* - Ensuring environmental sustainability; and *Goal 8* – Developing a global partnership for development.

It is only in the areas of maternal and child health that we may not achieve the set targets by 2015. However, in Uganda, we have developed a National Roadmap to accelerate the reduction of maternal and child mortality and morbidity. This is our comprehensive strategy which clearly spells out our national priorities. In this regard, we have prioritized 4 key interventions which include: effective antenatal care, skilled attendance at birth, emergency care for women who experience complications of child birth as well as family planning. We have also prioritized infrastructure that supports and strengthens the healthcare system. Regarding MDG 6, Uganda had made tremendous efforts regarding HIV/AIDS prevention and control. We are now renewing our efforts to deal with the challenges of this epidemic.

It is noteworthy that overall, Uganda was recently ranked among the middle performing countries according to the UNDP's Human Development Index.

However, in Uganda we have never believed in donor-anchored MDGs as a sustainable solution. MDGs should be anchored on the growth and transformation of the economies of the target countries. I am glad, therefore, that the cloud of Afro-pessimism is dispersing. The opinions of the Afro-pessimists are being consigned to where they have always belonged -- on the *dung-heap* of history. Some groups in the West, where Afro-pessimism abounded in the past, have now started talking of the African 'lions', no doubt trying to equate, in their minds, the performance of African economies to the Asian "tigers" of yester years. Groups like Mckinsey Global Institute are beginning to group the African economies, which collectively recorded a rate of growth of 4.9% of GDP in the gloom years of the recent global depression, compared to 2% of GDP for OECD Countries, into four categories: Diversified Economies, Oil Exporting Economies, transition economies and pre-transition economies. Uganda

was put in the transitional economies. Although the "Mckinsey" group needs to improve their statistical base and some of their insights, they are among the first Western groups to recognize what we, who have been working on African issues for a long time and what we set out to achieve in the years after independence, long ago knew was possible. This was to make Africa move from *Third world to First World* to use the words of Lee Kuan Yew, the former Prime Minister of Singapore. Although there are 53 economies of Africa being managed by the respective national authorities, the reform trends and ideas are sometimes shared. This group estimates that the consumption level of Africa which now stands at US\$ 860 billion (2008) will grow to US\$ 1.4 trillion by 2020.

What one needs to add is the fact that these economies have become *roaring lions*, under-developed infrastructure notwithstanding. What will happen when the infrastructure bottlenecks are resolved? What will happen when there is cheap and abundant electricity, cheap road transport and cheap rail transport? These are areas that had been neglected for a long time. This study by Mckinsey revealed that there are now 316 million new mobile phone subscribers since 2000 in Africa, more than the entire population of the USA (307million). There are 600 million hectares of uncultivated arable land in Africa.

If our partners could concentrate on assisting infrastructure development, Africa's transition would be that much faster. All the same a country like Uganda is transitioning. Aid in relevant sectors is welcome.

I know the theme of the General debate is: "*Reaffirming the Central Role of the United Nations in Global Governance*". In my short address I have, instead, spoken about Africa's economic re-awakening as a *roaring lion*. Was I irrelevant? I do not think so. It is these strong building blocks that will strengthen the UN. Africa has been a weak link in the chain of the struggle for improved governance in the world over the last 50 years. Improved economic performance in Africa is, therefore, good for herself and also good for the rest of the World.

I thank you very much.