



**STATEMENT
OF
H.E. MR. JOSÉ MÁRIO VAZ
PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU**

**AT THE
GENERAL DEBATE
OF 73RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, September 27th 2018

866 UN Plaza, Suite 481 New York, N.Y.10017 [Tel:1.212.896.8311](tel:1.212.896.8311)
Fax:1.212.896.8313



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Office of the Presidency

**Statement from His Excellency
Mr. José Mário Vaz
President of the Republic**

**73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly
New York**

Thursday, September 27, 2018

**Madam President,
Honorable Heads of State and Government,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

First I would like to address a few words to Her Excellency Mrs. **Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés**, and congratulate her on her election as the President of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly.

I assure you, Madam President, that you can count on the full cooperation of my country, Guinea-Bissau, in the performance of your high duties..



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Madam President,

I would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. **Miroslav Lajcák**, for his excellent work during his term.

Further, I would like to highlight the work of our current Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his innovative leadership of the Secretariat; the new momentum that he has instilled in the Organization in order to better face global challenges and strengthen multilateralism.

Indeed, your vision of our Organization's unifying role in affirming and applying the principles enshrined in the Charter and the collective responsibility of each Member State in establishing lasting global peace strengthens our conviction that, under your leadership, the United Nations will be better prepared and capable of contributing, in coming years, to the advent of a more just and equitable world.



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Madam President,

On September 24th we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the birth of President Nelson Mandela "**Madiba**" and had the opportunity to reflect on the life and accomplishments of this great humanist. The former South African president was an example of courage, abnegation, and tolerance. Mandela fought for freedom, justice, democracy, and a society where all people may live together with equality and in harmony. This is a great lesson that will continue to serve as a source of inspiration for us and future generations.

Madam President,

Honorable Heads of State and Government,

In his last report on the Organization's



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activities, the Secretary-General reminds us that, for many peoples, peace is still a goal that is difficult to reach. As our much-missed Kofi Annan said: “peace is a hung dream.”

Indeed, many conflicts persist around the world, and many people continue to suffer the destruction of war. Many deaths, including those of children, and millions of people who are forced to abandon their homes, their cities, in search of asylum, leaving part of their families and possessions acquired during a lifetime of work.

We cannot remain indifferent to so much suffering and despair by thousands of people, including children, seeking protection and asylum, particularly in Europe.

The situation in Palestine, as well as Yemen and Syria, continue to be a source of great concern for the international community.

In the African continent, internal tensions caused by terrorist group activities, particularly in the Sahel, which are spreading fear among



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the population and preventing their governments from focusing on development issues, and on creating the best life conditions for their citizens.

Climate change has caused increasingly more frequent droughts and floods in many parts of the world. Many island countries face the risks of disappearing due to rising sea levels. These challenges require from all of us efforts, new attitudes, and more responsible behaviors. Above all, we must rigorously meet the commitments undertaken in the Paris Accord.

Madam President,

I believe that we all have an obligation under the Charter of the United Nations to which we all subscribe, and must respect it whatever the circumstances, as the Principles contained therein are the foundation and basis for a world order based on rules. Specifically, the principle



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of peaceful resolution of disputes, the non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and multilateralism as the cornerstone to build international peace and security.

We live in a global village, where all are responsible, not only for what happens within our own territories, given the interdependence of countries. One country's national policies may gravely affect all other countries. This demands shared responsibility.

In this regard, I must not fail to address the issue of Security Council reform, particularly better representation of the African continent, in order to enhance the legitimacy of this principal United Nations organization.

Madam President,



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**Honorable Heads of State and Government,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I wish to take this opportunity before this august assembly to briefly share the current political situation in Guinea-Bissau, as well as results achieved.

Last April, in Lomé, Togo, as the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, we arrived at an important decision toward permanently overcoming the political and constitutional impasse that had been in place in my country for more than three years.

As Head of State, and in the name of building peace and stability in my country and the sub-region, I have pursued the recommendations coming out of the Conference, namely:

- Appointment of the consensus Prime Minister;



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- Scheduling of a date for legislative elections on November 18, 2018;

These recommendations have been fully implemented, with the following results:

- The formation of a Government of inclusion in accordance with the Conakry Agreement;
- The reopening of our National People's Assembly;
- The extension of the terms of Assembly members;
- The election of the members of the National Electoral Commission (CNE);
- The approval of the Government Program and the General State Budget;

Madam President,

Recent political, social, and economic events bear witness that the Bissau-Guinean people and



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our armed forces, together (mobilized), said no to instability and embarked on a path of peace and development.

The process for our elections on November 18th is underway, and we started to register voter on the 19th of this month, despite some delays due to technical and financial reasons.

Please note that, for the first time in the history of our Bissau-Guinean democracy, a legislative session has been completed without any interruptions caused by coup d'états and/or other incidents.

Accordingly, on this past August 30th, the Security Council took notice of the positive developments in the political stability in our country. I would also note that, as in previous reports, we were congratulated on the republican attitudes of the Armed Forces, which has displayed a notable sense of civic duty in recent years.

I take this opportunity to appeal to the



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international community and the members of the Security Council, which has exclusive prerogatives with respect to this matter, in the name of justice and national harmony, for the lifting of sanctions imposed on some officials of our Armed Forces.

Such decision, which has been desired and expected for so long, would certainly help to consolidate our democratic institutions and to bring about lasting peace in our country.

Madam President,

Heads of Delegations,

Peace is essential for successful development. But peace is not just the absence of armed conflict.

There can be no peace when a large portion, if not most, of the population, particularly women and youth, are not sufficiently valued, when their education is considered less important, when their contribution to the economic growth



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of our country is not recognized or fairly compensated, when women are not, in parity with men, in positions of influence, and are ignored as the pillar of society.

In my country, we recently took significant steps toward ensuring equal representation for men and women. The Parliament of Guinea-Bissau approved a Law that guarantees a minimum representation quota of 36% for women in positions of note, particularly in the National People's Assembly and in Government.

As President of the Republic and guarantor of national equity and unity, I am particularly pleased and grateful for these national advances.

Madam President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to conclude my remarks by reaffirming Guinea-Bissau's commitment to the



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principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to the important, unique, and irreplaceable role of our Organization.

We must join forces in order to better manage globalization, eradicate poverty and hunger, combat major endemic diseases, as well as guarantee education and potable water for all in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Let us be solidary and demonstrate our compassion for those who are fleeing persecution, war, and misery, particularly migrants and refugees, victims of political crises and natural calamities, who are desperately knocking on our doors.

In a solidary and brotherly world, we will be in a better position to build a better future for future generations.

Thank you very much!

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