



STATEMENT

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,**

COMRADE R.G. MUGABE, TO THE 71ST

SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE,

NEW YORK,

21ST SEPTEMBER, 2016.

Your Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson,
President of the 71st Session of the General
Assembly,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon,
Secretary General of the United Nations,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Comrades and Friends.

Let me begin by congratulating you, Ambassador Thomson, on your election to the Presidency of the 71st Session of the UN General Assembly. I also extend our deep appreciation to your immediate predecessor, Mr Mogens Lykketoft, for his able stewardship of this Assembly during the 70th Session.

Mr President,

We all vividly recall the momentous occasion in September last year when we adopted the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals “Agenda 2030”. This

Assembly provides us with a unique opportunity to review the measures we have taken thus far, at both the international and national levels, in line with our commitments to global socio-economic transformation.

While compromises were unavoidable, even inevitable, in developing this important agenda, compromises or half-measures have no place in its implementation phase. We need sincere, genuine and total commitment by all to the implementation of this Agenda, if it is not to join many other previous well-crafted global agendas that ended in failure and non-delivery. We hope that this time around, this agenda will meet better fate.

We are encouraged that, since September last year, foundational steps have been and are being taken, at various levels, to implement Agenda 2030. In this regard, we note the convening of the Global Infrastructure Forum in April this year, the convening of the Multi-Stakeholder Science, Technology and Innovation Forum in June, the launch of the

Technology Facilitation Mechanism and activation of it on-line platform.

We also note the follow up meetings pertaining to the development of concrete actions for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. These activities at the global level have been equally matched at the national level, with virtually all member states reporting preparations to implement this universal agenda.

Mr President,

On our part, I am happy to inform you that we have established national multi-stakeholder and multi-sector structures to domesticate and implement the 2030 Agenda, in a coordinated and integrated manner with our national development programme, the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset).

Our task of domesticating Agenda 2030 has been made relatively less challenging in that the vision and aspirations of our national economic blueprint and the global agenda, are basically the same. Our biggest impediment to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is the burden of the punitive and heinous sanctions imposed against us by some among us here.

My country, Zimbabwe, is the victim of spiteful sanctions imposed by the United States and other Western countries for some sixteen years now. As a country, we are being collectively punished for exercising the one primordial principle enshrined in the United Nations Charter, that of sovereign independence. We are being punished for doing what all other nations do, that is, responding to and looking after the basic interests of our people.

Those who have imposed these sanctions would rather have us pander to their interests at the expense of the basic needs of the majority of our people. As long as

these economic and financial sanctions remain in place, Zimbabwe's capacity to fully and effectively implement Agenda 2030 is deeply curtailed.

I repeat my call to Britain and US and their allies to remove the illegal and unjustified sanctions against my country and its people. We all must be bound by our commitments, to Agenda 2030 under which we all agreed to eschew sanctions in favour of dialogue.

Mr President,

This session of the General Assembly will elect the next Secretary-General of our organization. We have witnessed commendable efforts aimed at making the selection process of the next Secretary-General inclusive and transparent. This greater involvement of the General Assembly, and therefore of the majority of our membership, does not, however, mask the opaqueness of the process at the Security Council level. We expect the current experience to lead to a more inclusive and transparent process in the future.

Mr President,

For over 20 years, many of us have come to this rostrum, pleading and demanding the reform of the Security Council. Today we are no closer to achieving that goal than we were twenty years ago. This is so in spite of the universal acknowledgement of the injustice, unfairness and inappropriateness of the current composition of the Security Council. We have an opportunity, in the ongoing negotiations, in the Intergovernmental Negotiations, to redress this unjustifiable and unjust situation in the interests of a strong and united organization, capable of delivering on its mandates.

Mr President,

Our common commitment to leaving no one behind demands that we address the plight of peoples still living under colonialism and occupation. The people of Palestine have lived under occupation and persecution for over 49 years. It is high time that the United

Nations, in particular the Security Council, fulfils its Charter duties and obligations by implementing its resolutions, including 181, 242 and 338. The two state solution, based on the pre-June 1967 borders, should now be pursued within set parameters and set timelines. This is the only way to achieve durable peace in the Middle East.

On our own continent, the United Nations is duty bound by the principles in the Charter to redouble efforts to ensure full realization of the rights of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. Agenda 2030 recognises that sustainable development cannot be achieved without the full realization of the rights of people living under colonial and foreign occupation. We urge the holding of the independence referendum for the Saharawis without much further delay.

Mr President,

Let me conclude by thanking the Secretary General, Mr Ban Ki Moon, for the tremendous work he has done

during his tenure. We have appreciated his presence at the African Union Summits and his visits to Africa as clear testimony to his commitment to and partnership with Africa in advancing the cause of freedom, development, peace and security.

We particularly applaud the Secretary General's leadership in mobilizing the entire United Nations system and indeed the international community to partner with Africa in stopping and rolling back the EBOLA epidemic which claimed thousands of lives and undermined socio-economic development on our continent. He has indeed been an indefatigable advocate for self-determination and a persistent champion for inclusive development, peace and building coalitions to deal with humanitarian and other crises. We wish him well in all his future endeavours.

I thank you.

RGM/jm