



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

ADDRESS

BY

**RT HON DR RUHAKANA RUGUNDA
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

AT THE

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

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**Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
President of the UN General Assembly,
Secretary General of United Nations,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I congratulate Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa on her election as President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly and assure her of Uganda's support. We are confident that she will lead the Assembly effectively and successfully. I would also like to express our gratitude to H.E. Mr Miroslav Lajčák, for his leadership of the 72nd Session. I pay tribute to the Secretary-General, H.E. António Guterres, for his personal dedication and commitment to the work of the United Nations.

The theme for this 73rd Session "***making United Nations relevant to all people***" is very pertinent. Three years ago in this hall, we adopted a universal and transformative Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, to guide our efforts over the next fifteen years. At the heart of the 2030 Agenda was a pledge to "leave no-one behind". It meant that the seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs) and targets should be met for everyone, with a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and furthest behind – indeed those who are often the hardest to reach.

We in Uganda are devoting reasonable amount of time and resources to follow through on the implementation of the Agenda and establish links between the SDGs and our national priorities. We are deliberately working to ensure that the SDGs are implemented in an effective and timely manner for socio-economic transformation and improvement of our people's livelihoods. To do so, we have integrated over 76% of the SDGs into the National Development Plan for the period 2015-2020, as part of Uganda Vision 2040.

From our engagements thus far, it is evident that the biggest challenge remains inadequate financing to implement the 2030 agenda – an issue that came out clearly in the High-Level Political Forum held here in New York last June. We in Uganda, are doing our best to mobilize resources, both domestic and external, for implementation of the SDGs. We are committed to leveraging support into productive areas, including the private sector, which has the potential of boosting our economy and thereby contributing additional internally generated resources for implementing the SDGs.

We call upon Development Partners to fulfil their commitments and extend support in terms of timely and adequate means for its implementation; prioritise the special needs of the most vulnerable countries; and strengthen partnerships.

Madam President

Our development and transformation cannot take place without peace and security – these are prerequisites for socio-economic transformation. We should give attention to supporting an environment that is peaceful, thus enabling us to concentrate on growth and development.

Today's challenges transcend borders and no country, alone, can carry the weight of the world on its shoulders. We must redouble our collective efforts to seek common solutions to various pressing regional and global challenges including conflicts in various parts of the world; transnational organised crime, terrorism and violent extremism.

We must be unwavering in our resolve to combat terrorism. Religious extremism and terrorism from groups like Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, ISIS and Al Qaida constitute threats to our common security and development. This threat is compounded today given the possibility of the linkage between terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These are challenges that cut across national boundaries and require collective responses.

Madam President

Uganda remains committed to multilateralism as a means to achieving comprehensive and equitable solutions to global problems and challenges. In order to respond successfully to global crises, threats and challenges, the international community needs an efficient multilateral system. It is for this reason that Uganda has continued to advance the cause for a revitalized, reformed and effective United Nations system. This is critical to make the UN more responsive, efficient and effective in its support to the member states' efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals.

Uganda supports the comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council and our approach is consistent with the continent's common position, as enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus. First, African issues dominate the Security Council agenda and therefore the vast majority of decisions made by the Council affect African countries. Second, over the last few years, Africa has shown its commitment to conflict prevention, mediation and resolution as demonstrated by its leadership and response to conflict situations on the continent.

We believe that for a continent with 54 countries, a population of over one billion people and demonstrable political commitment, the continent should have a bigger voice in the global political debate which will increase the legitimacy of the decisions of the Council and foster its effectiveness. It is essential that the Security

Council's membership, in the permanent and non-permanent category, is equitable and reflects today's geopolitical realities. We therefore, support efforts of Members States to move the intergovernmental negotiations process forward, and call for a constructive spirit in order to realize the long-awaited reform.

Madam President

Strengthening South-South cooperation is critical for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the forty years of its existence, South-South Cooperation has proven to be a valuable avenue for building capacity and promoting development in developing countries. It has also facilitated cooperation manifested in the South-South and triangular cooperation. It is our desire that we expand the scope of South-South cooperation to include; among others; trade, investment, infrastructure, tourism, peacebuilding and other areas of mutual interest.

We look forward to the forthcoming United Nations Ministerial Conference on South-South Cooperation in Buenos Aires, which we hope will dedicate time to consider how to strengthen and further revitalize this cooperation, within the context of a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Madam President

The UN has the primary responsibility for international peace and security. However, in undertaking this role it is essential that it supports initiatives undertaken by regional and sub-regional organizations. This partnership should be based on division of labour and burden sharing, complementarity, and mutual respect.

In Africa, the evidence is that where this cooperation has happened, the results have been positive. One example is the cooperation between the UN and the AU on the situation in Somalia, where AMISOM has supported the efforts of the government to stabilize

that country. Uganda has played an active role in these regional initiatives. Since AMISOM's deployment 11 years ago, we have witnessed tremendous progress in Somalia.

- The Somali Government previously based out of the country has been based in Mogadishu since 2007;
- International Organizations including the United Nations and Diplomatic Missions have also relocated to Mogadishu;
- More than 80% of Al-Shabaab dominated areas have been liberated;
- The threat of piracy at sea that threatened international shipping and trade has been neutralized;
- Business is thriving and there are many reconstruction activities in many parts of the country and
- Regular elections have been held.

These positive developments and Somalia's relative stability would hardly have been possible without the contribution and sacrifice of AMISOM and the Somali Security Forces. Uganda appreciates the support that the African Union and international partners have given to AMISOM.

AMISOM was never intended to be in Somalia forever. That is why it is essential that Somalia is supported to provide security for its people. It is crucial that any reduction in the troops of AMISOM corresponds with the strengthening of the Somali Security Forces. The failure to carefully manage this process could imperil the political and security gains already made.

On South Sudan, Uganda has actively participated in the IGAD-led peace process launched in June 2017, and we welcome the recently signed revitalised Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS).

The agreement outlines guidelines on power sharing and governance, security arrangements, including settling boundary disputes which will be guided by a Boundary Commission. We call on the international community to support the implementation of the Agreement.

Madam President

Climate change remains a major challenge and a threat to our efforts to achieve sustainable development. Uganda supported efforts to reach a new, universally-binding climate change agreement reached in Paris, in December 2015. Uganda was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the agreement last year. We must continue to muster the necessary political will to fully implement the agreement. There is a need for the enhanced delivery of finance to the most vulnerable countries to support their climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

As highlighted in Agenda 2030, ***“we can be the first generation to succeed in ending poverty; just as we may be the last to have a chance of saving the planet.”***

Let all of us commit to preventing wars and promoting peace.

Let us build new international relations.

Let us reduce inequalities.

Let us ensure that no one is left behind and

Let us uphold the primary role of the United Nations as the principal Organisation for addressing global challenges.

Madam President

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda coincided with the onset of what would become Uganda’s single largest refugee influx in our history. As a country, we now hosts 1.4 million the largest refugees on the African continent and ranking high in the world.

The presence of large numbers of refugees—mostly arriving unexpectedly and *quickly*— amplifies the existing vulnerability of host communities. It also places huge demands on already-stretched national capacities and resources.

Uganda remains committed to maintaining and promoting asylum space and its refugee model consistent with the New York Declaration. We do this because we know that no one chooses to be a refugee and also understand the critical importance of treating refugees humanely, decently and with dignity. We also remain committed to working with national, regional and international actors, in addressing the drivers of displacement and refugees.

We are grateful for the solidarity and support the international community has extended to Uganda thus far. It is our expectation that that the new Global Compact on Refugees will provide the much needed predictable and equitable burden and responsibility sharing, among all Member States.

Finally, Uganda remains ready to work with the UN Secretary General and all the Member States to realise a United Nations that is more inclusive, effective and responsive to the needs of the peoples of the world.

I Thank You