



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Statement by President Jacob Zuma, at the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, during the "UN Summit for the Adoption of the Post 2015 Development Agenda", UN General Assembly Hall New York, 27 September 2015.

SUNDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2015

Your Excellency,

President Yoweri Museveni;

Your Excellency,

Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen;

Your Excellency, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon;

Your Excellencies;

Distinguished Delegations;

Seventy years ago, at the birth of the United Nations, the drafters of the UN Charter pledged "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

The objective was to save future generations from the scourge of war, through eradicating poverty, and promoting an improved quality of life for all the peoples of the world, especially the poor.

The world was very different then to what it is today. Many members of the Group of 77 plus China were in fact not free, and were living under foreign and colonial occupation.

In the last seventy years, the world has seen many developments, including decolonisation and the ushering in of freedom and self-determination and the establishment of new free and independent nations.

However, despite such progress, the world has not adequately addressed underdevelopment, inequality, increasing poverty and economic exclusion.

Fifteen years ago, the Millennium Declaration was adopted. The Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs) became a clarion call for directing and promoting global socio-economic development and for removing millions of people from poverty across the globe.

The Secretary-General's most recent report on the MDGs indicates that the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined significantly.

Progress has been recorded in some of the MDGs.

In my own country South Africa, there has been a huge increase in a number of areas, such as education, health and gender equality.

The primary school enrolment including the participation of girls has increased. Child and maternal mortality show a decline.

Targeted interventions in fighting diseases, such as HIV and AIDS have also saved thousands of lives.

The achievement of the MDGs has been uneven across geographical regions with regions such as Africa lagging behind, due to historical reasons of underdevelopment.

This is the context in which we adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at this historic 70th anniversary of the United Nations.

The goals and targets, cover all three dimensions of sustainable development and enable us to continue seamlessly from the MDGs.

They range from ending poverty, ensuring healthy lives, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, conserving and sustainably using the oceans; to addressing climate change.

South Africa endorses this transformative post 2015 Development Agenda without any reservations.

The triple challenge of poverty, unemployment and inequality that the development agenda seeks to address is the primary focus of the South African government and people.

The Goals are also aligned to South Africa's National Development Plan as well as to the African Union's Agenda 2063.

More importantly, the outcome document represents a victory for developing countries as it affirms that the 2030 Agenda should build on the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals.

In addition, while the 2030 agenda is universal in that the goals apply to both developed and developing countries, there is a clear recognition of the Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities.

This takes into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and also respects national policies and priorities.

The negotiations of the 2030 Agenda have also taken place against the backdrop of the recently concluded Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development as well as the current United Nations Framework for Climate Change Convention negotiations.

While the new Agenda stands on its own, it will draw on the support of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the United Nations Framework for Climate Change Convention outcome, as well as the outcomes of other multilateral meetings, both now and in the future, to achieve its objectives.

We are also pleased that the 2030 Agenda global agenda contains a specific goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

All the 17 goals, including those on poverty eradication, education, health, job creation and inequality contain specific references to addressing the challenges that confront women, the youth, people with disabilities and other vulnerable sectors of our society.

We are also particularly pleased that the 2030 Agenda contains a stand-alone goal on the means of implementation. This is to ensure that adequate attention is placed on the achievement of the goals.

Events in the recent past have demonstrated that the countries of the developed North cannot insulate themselves from the challenges facing countries of the developing South.

In this regard, we welcome the commitment to the Global Partnership to ensure the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

We call on the Development Partners to not only meet their current commitments, but also to upscale Overseas Development Assistance, with binding timetables, including the reaffirmation that ODA remains the main source of development assistance for many developing countries.

We also reiterate that climate financing is new and additional to and cannot be counted as ODA, nor can it be mixed with traditional development finance.

Significant work and consultation has gone into negotiating the 2030 Agenda.

We now have a document which we can confidently say reflects our global development aspirations, building on the progress made in the past 15 years.

The full implementation of the 2030 Agenda will move the world forward towards the realization of the United Nations Charter vision of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, as pledged at the founding of the United Nations 70 years ago.

I thank you.