



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

828 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • TEL. (212) 953-9130 • FAX (212) 697-1970

Please check against delivery

# STATEMENT

OF

H. E. CHIEF OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR  
PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Delivered by

H. E. Professor U. Joy Ogwu, OFR

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Federal Republic of Nigeria

AT THE

GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE

61<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK, 25 SEPTEMBER 2006

Madam President,

On behalf of the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to you and your country, the Kingdom of Bahrain, on your historic election as President of the Sixty-First Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your assumption of this high office is a source of inspiration to all of us, particularly to women all over the world. I assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation.

I would like to extend my profound appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, for the commitment and dedication with which he presided over the affairs of the Sixtieth Session. This was particularly evident during the delicate negotiations that resulted in the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the creation of the Human Rights Council.

Madam President,

The Founding Fathers of the United Nations envisaged an international organization whose primary strength would rest on the ability of its members to act collectively and in the spirit of cooperation in solving international problems.

The theme for this year's General Debate, Implementing a Global Partnership for Development, aptly captures this aspiration and, indeed, reaffirms one of the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

Nigeria restates its firm commitment to the principle that genuine global partnership is the key to development. This is particularly so in the face of the many challenges confronting us today.

For Africa, the most urgent challenge remains the resolution of conflicts and the sustenance of peace and security as foundation for socio-economic progress. However, we have remained undaunted and have collectively decided to take action to address the problem through the auspices of the African Union. Our efforts have been bolstered by the active engagement of the Security Council and the international community for which we remain grateful. I am happy to note that in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where hostilities have happily ceased, there are signs of progress everywhere, as democracy and its benefits take their most important first steps.

With respect to Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria welcomes the recent efforts by all parties to overcome their differences through dialogue. We urge them to remain steadfast in their commitment in order to ensure that the peace process remains on course. However, it is now doubtful that elections can take place in October. Nevertheless, the elections in Cote d'Ivoire

must not be allowed to be frustrated beyond 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006. If the proposed extra-ordinary meeting of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in early October, fails to achieve this goal, a resolution of the Security Council will become necessary to impose heavy sanctions on all culprits and their relations.

Madam President,

Nigeria is encouraged by the progress towards implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement which was signed in Abuja last June. We are however concerned by the slow pace of implementation of key aspects of the plan which have exacerbated the humanitarian situation. We share the frustration of the international community over the inaccessibility to vulnerable groups in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. We call on all parties to respect their commitments.

The situation in Darfur has placed a heavy burden on the African Union and continues to exert pressure on its meagre resources as it struggles to maintain a peacekeeping force of over 7,000 troops. Africa's commitment to peace in Darfur was reaffirmed by the latest decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at its meeting in New York on 20 September 2006, to extend the mandate of the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS) until 31 December 2006. Nigeria calls on the international community to urgently avail the African Union the logistical and financial support to sustain AMIS up till that period.

Madam President,

If an early removal of the obstacles that have, so far, prevented the conclusion of the negotiations on the replacement of the African Union with UN peacekeeping force cannot be achieved, the African Union may be left with no option but to allow the troops to return to the contributing countries. The consequences of the withdrawal of AMIS, without United Nations umbrella, will be the full responsibility of the Government of Sudan.

Madam President,

Nigeria is concerned by the increasing threat of violence and insecurity in the world brought about by threats or acts of terrorism. Nigeria strongly condemns all acts of terrorism and calls upon the international community to redouble its efforts in order to defeat this heinous crime in all its forms and manifestations.

On the situation in the Middle East, Nigeria welcomes Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) and calls for the full implementation of the terms of the ceasefire by both parties. We

believe, however, that a long lasting solution must come through dialogue and a readiness to abandon violence as a means of resolving the crisis.

The root causes of the Middle East crisis must also be addressed in a comprehensive manner for lasting peace to be attained. We reaffirm our commitment to a two-state arrangement, Israel and Palestine living in peace with secured borders, in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

We, therefore, call on the international community to show greater commitment to the peaceful and early resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Madam President,

West Africa has experienced conflicts for many years as a result of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the sub-region. We believe that the restoration and sustenance of peace are critical for socio-economic development in the sub-region. Towards this end, Member States of ECOWAS adopted a landmark Convention on Small Arms in June this year to reduce violence in the sub-region and pave the way for the achievement of peace, security, stability cooperation and development.

The Convention bans international arms transfers except those for the legitimate defence and security needs of Member States. Of greatest significance is the ban on transfers to non-state actors who have been largely responsible for political instability in the sub-region, as elsewhere. In this regard, I wish to express Nigeria's deep disappointment that the first United Nations Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons failed to agree on a final document, including a similar ban on arms suppliers to non-state actors.

I urge all Member States to be guided by the example of ECOWAS on this issue when and if the Conference reconvenes. As a demonstration of Nigeria's commitment to the fight against illicit small arms, we have deposited the instrument of ratification of the Firearms Protocol to the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. We also call for a comprehensive and legally binding global Arms Trade Treaty.

Madam President,

Humankind has made giant strides in the field of nuclear technology since the discovery of the atom. It has opened up vistas of opportunities for determined and committed societies to uplift the standard of living of their citizenry.

Nuclear energy has become a veritable source for socio-economic development and a reliable source for electricity generation. We note in particular the global trend for the utilization of nuclear technology for the generation of electricity, agricultural development, human health and environmental development, especially for developing countries.

In the context of this development and the enormous energy crisis that confronts us in Nigeria, my Government decided to inaugurate the Board of the Nigeria Atomic Energy Commission (NAEC). With the inauguration of the Board, our quest for energy self-sufficiency has begun.

Nigeria remains resolute in its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Pelindaba Treaty on African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. We wish to assure the international community of our determination to restrict the use of nuclear energy for purely peaceful purposes.

Madam President,

I seize this occasion to reiterate our deep appreciation to this august body for the invaluable support it has given to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We are also very appreciative of the existing interest and commitments made by the international community in support of NEPAD.

The NEPAD initiative remains our continent's most viable socio-economic blueprint that could bring sustained economic growth while strengthening good governance and enhancing the protection of human rights of our peoples.

Trade is one of the most potent and veritable engines of economic growth and development. We, therefore, support efforts that would enhance the ability of our countries to enjoy the benefit of successful conclusion of regimes of agreements under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In this connection, we regard the recent breakdown of the WTO Doha Round Development talks as a very serious setback.

The successful conclusion of Doha Development talks and its implementation will provide succour to almost one billion people currently subsisting on less than \$1. a day. We urge all parties to return to the negotiating table and resume talks in the spirit of global partnership, cooperation and global economic progress.

Nigeria remains committed to the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, tuberculosis and related diseases. We have taken bold steps to deal with them. To this end, we hosted the Special Summit of the African Union on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Abuja, in April this year. At the Summit, African Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to earlier declarations and pledged to take immediate action to ensure universal access to relevant drugs. We applaud the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS which was adopted at the High-Level meeting on HIV/AIDS last June and hope that it will be fully implemented.

Madam President,

On 14 August this year, Nigeria lowered its flag for the last time and effectively withdrew its presence from the Bakassi Peninsula in accordance with the ruling of the International Court of Justice. With this final act, Nigeria has fulfilled its obligations under the terms of the agreement between her and the Cameroon.

I use this opportunity to recognize the positive contributions of Mr Kofi Annan and members of the international community for their assistance and support. Nigeria hopes that our brotherly neighbour shall protect and respect the rights and freedoms of Nigerian nationals who decide to remain in the area in accordance with the mutually agreed terms.

Madam President,

Nigeria believes that the reform of the United Nations system must not lose momentum. National or regional interests should not be allowed to obscure our common objectives for a reinvigorated United Nations. The reform should be linked to the overall interest of making our Organization stronger, more effective and better positioned to meet the challenges facing both the weak and the strong.

The identity, importance, and relevance of the different organs of the Organization must be maintained. Above all, nothing should be done to weaken one in favour of the other. The General Assembly, as the pre-eminent, deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, deserves the support of all members. It remains the only organ where all states, big or small, rich or poor, find equality and voice.

It is in this context that African countries, along with other member states of the United Nations, have called for the reform of the Security Council. For us, no reform will be complete without the reform of this vital organ. The Security Council, as presently constituted, does not

reflect the realities of our time. We hope that progress will be made on this issue during this Session.

Madam President,

I cannot conclude this statement without paying a special tribute to my brother and distinguished statesman, Mr Kofi Annan. Nigeria salutes your dedicated service to our Organization.

You have, in the last ten years, assiduously piloted the United Nations through very important milestones and turbulent waters. It is, indeed, impossible to forget the reform agenda that you have initiated and set in motion. We are proud of you and your services. We wish you the best in your future endeavours.

As I am attending the United Nations General Assembly for the last time in my capacity as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I wish to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues and the Secretary-General as well as all the staff of our Organization for their support and cooperation over the past seven years.

I thank you all.