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Keynote speech at the **“Sustainable Development in Southern Africa:
Mobilising Partnerships and Capacity for Achieving MDGs”**.

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As we start the new millennium and the continuing development challenges, I am pleased to be here with you today.

The topic “Sustainable Development in Southern Africa: Mobilising Partnerships and Capacity for Achieving Millennium Development Goals” is a critical one in this millennium. Since September 2000 when the declaration was made at the United Nations, this forum in Johannesburg offers regional opportunities for both reflection and practical action towards achieving the millennium development goals.

Chairperson, colleagues, I have just come from Trondheim, in Norway, where I was at the 12th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches. At that forum, I discussed my concerns on development challenges. I discussed with them my concerns about the direction of humanity in the new millennium. We live in an interdependent world. Some issues that I discussed with them are similar to the ones we face in southern Africa. Indeed, in this inter-dependent world, the issues we discussed in Europe are linked to our lives in southern Africa. Indeed, the issue you are discussing at this Forum are linked to the other parts of the world. Truly, we are one humanity. Indeed, we have common responsibility for our actions. This world can only reach a sustainable life for all if we all take responsibility for our policies and actions.

You have come from various countries .You have come from various sectors and backgrounds – United Nations, government, civil society, the church, and other sectors. I have personally seen your good work as United Nations, as government officials, and civil society. I have seen your work over many sectors. From your sessions at the forum, I confirm that you are looking at various parts of the development process. Yes, a multi-sectoral, holistic, and participatory approach is required for the world to prosper.

In this forum, I am pleased to meet colleagues I have discussed projects with. I am pleased to meet those people whose ideas I have heard about. I am also glad to have the chance to meet all you people whose action has led to us witnessing great works. I am pleased to meet you, you who support the development process .We have been partners and we need to move forward to share our work in this millennium.

I come here not as an expert, but to reflect and share views with you. I come here as one person interested in sustainable development. Over the years, I have had chance to reflect on the situation of our region and humanity as a whole. I remember the trauma of slavery. I remember the colonial times. I remember our struggles in support of the freedom of southern Africa.

I remember our struggles over economic issues. By the beginning of this millennium, Africa had made its political advances. In this region's journey, we have made strides and we have also experienced pain. Just after independence, we made achievements in people's access to basic needs. Yet as we entered this millennium, the quality of people's lives has generally declined.

This is a big question for people interested in the millennium development goals. How is it that southern Africa and Africa made advances just after independence, and then later there was decline and even reversal of the quality of people's lives? What is it from *our past* experience that hinders reaching the goal of millennium development?

What is it in *our present* that hinders reaching the millennium goals? What needs to be done to improve things? And what has to be undone in order to improve things?

The reflection and action and the future lie within our hands. Sustainable development will depend on our present actions. This forum therefore holds great potential. 150 participants from many sectors can pull thoughts together and, working effectively with the citizens of the region, help southern Africa.

Chairperson, I believe we need to look at policies and practices that constrain development. We also need to support policies and practices that facilitate sustainable human development.

Policies drive practices and practices further interact with policies. When I reflect, I can see these policies and practices at many levels. These start from the personal to the family, community, nation, and the whole globe. These policies involve many dimensions, including political, social, cultural, and economic aspects. Thus the development process is a multidimensional venture that involves many platforms.

We have come from a situation where, after independence, we tried to cover the millennium goals through meeting the basic needs of our nations. Access to health and education increased tremendously. In Zambia, as other parts of the region, literacy rates increased multifold. Full school enrolment was reached for some age groups. Many girls were now able to attend school. Food production and nutrition went up. Infant mortality reduced. Water and sanitation improved. Shelter improved. Yes, life expectancy rose dramatically and poverty reduced. I am sure amongst you here are participants dealing with statistics and they will be able to confirm this.

Those dealing with statistics will also be able to show us the later decline in the process of human development. What factors have affected our access to basic needs, human rights, and peace? What is making us slide backwards? The September 2000 United Nations declaration recognised that there was still much to be done. For sustainable development to be reached, we need to consider eight core goals. Some of these issues we tried and did well on before. Some of these issues we need to enhance action on. Besides, poverty and hunger, education, gender equality and women's situation, child mortality and maternal mortality, we need to focus on environment, HIV/AIDS and diseases, and develop global partnerships and platforms.

Friends, each area has its own particular history and potential solutions. In southern Africa, we must remember the effect of regional events on our development process. The liberation struggle has left many countries burdened with huge debts. Thousands of people died as a result of the conflict involving racism and apartheid. Land mines are still there in parts of the region, killing,

maining, and preventing people from enjoying livelihoods. We were bombed and infrastructure was destroyed.

Economies were destabilised and, to make ends meet, governments went to borrowing. From borrowing came creditor conditionalities that further worsened our situation. For Zambia, southern Africa's liberation struggle led to financial costs of over \$20 billion. All over the region, countries were negatively affected. However, although the struggle against racism and apartheid was for the common good, there have not been regional and global programmes to redress the trauma and economic effects of the period. These effects live on today and affect how we will achieve the millennium development goals.

Southern Africa was also affected by internal conflict. Some of these conflicts affected neighbours and the region. The opportunities for development were negatively affected.

Yes. We are affected by conflict. As in the 1973 war in the Middle East, when oil prices went up and affected economies, and as in the destabilisation systems of apartheid, the invasion of Iraq by the George W Bush and Tony Blair administrations will greatly affect the world. Economies and human relations will be affected. I must ask you, friends, to think about the effect of all these armed conflicts and wars on nations, southern Africa, and the whole world.

The journey to the millennium development goals is slowed down by armed conflict and war. As part of the goal of sustainable development in the millennium, we need healing of conflict. We need to deal with various causes of conflict at personal, community, national, regional, and world levels. Otherwise, time, energies and resources, which should go into achieving basic needs, will be redirected into the machinery of war. Peace and sustainable development are part of each other.

Chairperson, friends, I must also add that some things which have affected our development in southern Africa have not been of our own making. There have been floods and drought. Then there has been the emergence of HIV/AIDS, which has completely affected human endeavour and human kind, as we know it. Sub-Saharan Africa has high rates of HIV prevalence. Southern Africa has high rates, with Botswana and Swaziland rising to around 38% of those aged 15 to 49 years.

However, the way we respond to drought, flood, and HIV/AIDS depends on us and is of our making. We are not just victims. We can determine our future. Flood and drought does not necessarily mean starvation. HIV/AIDS is not a death sentence. We can redress the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. HIV/AIDS is part of the millennium challenge. Redressing the effects of HIV/AIDS will lead towards reaching the millennium development goals. The millennium goals programmes need to consider early warning and monitoring systems. They need to consider prevention, treatment, care, and mitigation of HIV/AIDS impact. When I have taken an HIV test, in the 2002, it has been part of breaking the wall of silence over HIV/AIDS. Even if I had been found positive, I still would have used that status to campaign against the pandemic, as I still do now.

Here, I would wish to make special mention of the support from the UNDP office in Lusaka, led by my sister Miss King Akerele, to our efforts in the fight against this pandemic. The unflinching support to both the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation and the Facilitation of the Zambia Business Coalition on AIDS, of which I am the Patron, through the United Nations Country Team in Zambia has been highly appreciated by the nation.

We are being helped as part of UNDP's Zambia Multi-Sectoral HIV/AIDS Program for Advocacy in the planning and implementation of a process for improving and extending advocacy for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and support for behaviour change – amongst others and throughout the country.

I also want to make special mention of the linkages established with UNDP-Swaziland through your country offices where the resident representative there, Mrs Lwanga, made possible support for me to visit Swaziland to help their efforts in advocacy work. This highly helped to bring out the HIV/AIDS pandemic issues and establish their business coalition on AIDS with support from the Zambia office.

Chairperson, I mention these two dimensions of my involvement with your UNDP offices at the NATIONAL LEVEL, because we cannot talk about the MDGs without factoring in the significance of HIV/AIDS.

To reach the millennium development goals, we must base our action on truth. We must be open and frank. We must learn from where we are coming from. We must know our present situation. We must have accurate data and statistics. Too often, there have been differences in data and statistics. The differences should make us strive to improve our measurement techniques. We need to debate analyses and findings. We must free our minds and explore the various possibilities that can make us reach the millennium goals.

Chairperson, friends, our economies were affected by high oil prices and cost of imports. The price of our export commodities went down – be they copper or coffee or tea. We began to note that the terms of trade became more and more unfair. As Zambia's president, I was troubled by the pressures of having to meet the basic needs of Zambia's people and the pressures of poor commodity prices and a harsh debt regime. Without fair trade, we will continue to be recipients of aid. Without fair trade, a fair trade whose benefits reach the small-scale producers and service providers, we will not reach the millennium development goals.

Without environmentally sound economic policies and practices, there can be no sustained development.

Friends, debt is still greatly affecting southern Africa's people. The conditions by creditors are making it difficult for economies to be sustainable. Whatever we do, the goal posts by creditors keep on changing to our disadvantage. When I was privileged to be Zambia's President, I experienced harsh conditionalities. Unless the creditors and donors realise that our well being is linked to their sustainable prosperity, it will be difficult to meet the millennium development goals. Our world will remain polarised with the rich creditor nations becoming richer and southern Africa poorer. "Globalisation" is turning out more and more for interests of the rich.

We need regional linkages. The Frontline States, SADC, COMESA, and the OAU, now the AU, are examples of what we tried to do. We also have NEPAD. They have come far. We need to analyse these institutions, their limitations, strengths, and how we can move ahead to reach the millennium goals. We need to collaborate with multilateral organisations like the United Nations and its agencies. There is also the Common Wealth Group nation. And the Non-Aligned Movement. As during the time of the fight against racism and apartheid, we have some people of Good Will in

other parts of the world. We need linkages with people in other regions of Africa. We need linkages with people from other continents in the South. We need linkages and common action with colleagues in the industrial world. Together we can reverse negative policies and practices. Together, we can reach the millennium development goals.

Governments need to enable an environment, which promotes action towards the goals. Governments need to consider various policies and practices and the way these affect the goals. Participants here can help create that atmosphere. We need to work with civil society, churches, business, and various sectors.

For governments to enable a creative environment, creditors and donors must enable them to develop their own appropriate policies. Creditor and donor yokes weigh heavily on people's journey on the path to millennium development goals. Agencies like UNDP can help to sensitise donors, remove the yoke and continue to call for humane and sustainable development. UNICEF has done very well on looking at the human cost of economic policies. UNDP has also done much with its national and international human development reports. These will continue to remind us about the gaps in the reaching the millennium goals.

Partnerships and networks involving various levels and platforms must be explored and created. We must also increase capacities at various levels.

Friends, crucial to the success of the millennium development programmes are participation. People from all walks of life need to be involved in finding solution to their lives. We need to bring to the centre all the people on the margins. These include young persons, the elderly, women, people of various ethnic groups, people from other religions and spiritual beliefs, the poor, the businesspersons, people with disability, and every one. We can act together. We have a common future. We have a common millennium. I would like to hear from you.

Thank you.