



## **ADDRESS**

By

**H.E. Mr. JOAQUIM ALBERTO CHISSANO**  
President of the Republic of Mozambique

at the

**Fiftieth-Ninth Session of the  
General Assembly of the United Nations**

New York, 21 September, 2004

Mr. President,

On behalf of the People and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, I would like to congratulate you upon your election as President of 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. We are delighted to see a distinguished son of Africa in the stewardship of the highest organ of the United Nations, which shows the confidence the world places on your experience, wisdom and proven skills.

Let me also pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, H. E. Mr. Julian Robert Hunte, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Commerce of Saint Lucia, for successfully having presided over one of the most productive sessions of the General Assembly.

I wish to commend the Secretary General for his continued devotion to the fundamental ideals of our Organisation, stressing the importance of multilateralism, with a view to addressing global challenges before us, such as to eradicate poverty, hunger, pandemic diseases, illiteracy and to bring about development, peace and stability. His efforts aimed at reforming the United Nations and aligning its work with the priorities set out in the Millennium Declaration and other major outcomes of UN Summits and Conferences, deserve our strong support. We encourage him to continue with his outstanding work.

Mr. President,

I speak before this august Assembly at a time when Mozambique is preparing to conduct its 3<sup>rd</sup> multiparty general elections to be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004.

Having had the privilege of leading my country through many challenges, moving from war to peace, from destruction to reconstruction, from economic decline to economic growth and development, I felt I should allow other elected sons and daughters of Mozambique the opportunity to take up the noble task of conducting the affairs of the nation. This is, therefore, my very last attendance of a session of the General Assembly in my capacity as Head of State and Government.

After the elections, I will join the civil society and continue to give my humble contribution to the efforts on the prevailing challenges still facing Mozambique, Africa and the world, particularly in the areas of peace, social and economic development and culture.

I have been attending sessions of the General Assembly since 1975, first in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and then as President of Mozambique. I cherished every moment I have spent here at the United Nations, as part of the global efforts to collectively find solutions to the problems around the world. It has been, indeed, quite a rewarding experience, as through our common resolve, we have been able to successfully advance the decolonisation process in Africa and elsewhere, while engaging in the on-going struggle for peace and stability, poverty eradication and development.

Mr. President,

As I depart allow me to share some reflections on the role played by our universal organisation, the United Nations. Reaffirming the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the principles set forth in the Charter of

the United Nations and General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Mozambique attained its independence from colonial rule in 1975. Since then, the country has been actively involved and progressively improved its relations with the UN and related organizations, and has received a strong multidisciplinary support.

Since then, more than 60 territories world-wide became decolonised and millions of people are today able to exercise their right to self-determination.

It was in September 16, 1975 that, for the first time, I had the privilege of addressing the General Assembly, from this rostrum. I was then the Foreign Minister of my country and I was expressing the gratitude of the people and the government of Mozambique, for our admission as member of the United Nations.

When Mozambique was admitted, the United Nations was composed of 132 Member States, compared to 191, in 2004, which shows the growth of our organization. In Africa, countries like Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa and Western Sahara were not independent yet or were under Apartheid domination. In other continents the situation was very similar.

The cold war was at its peak, with arms race as a dominant feature in international politics. The focus of the Non-Aligned Movement was on advocating the interests of the developing countries, in raising the international awareness for the dangers and risks of a nuclear confrontation and the struggle for a New International Economic Order. In those days of high political tensions, the international dialogue was characterized by confrontation and intolerance. Today, the international dialogue is more of consultations and search for consensus; the constructive dialogue existing between Africa and the G8, the EU, ASEAN, Mercosul and other regional groupings are good examples of the new international political mood. In all this process, the UN has played an important role.

Soon after its independence, my country had to face the economic and social consequences of closing its border with Southern Rhodesia, in compliance with a UN resolution that imposed sanctions on that neighbouring territory. This was a costly effort, but because it has achieved its aim to end the illegal regime in that territory we feel proud of having taken that action.

During that period, Mozambique enjoyed important support from United Nations, particularly for the areas of health, education, rural development, advocacy, and emergency assistance for the victims of war and natural disasters.

Following many years of a destabilization war, on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1992, the Government and Renamo signed the General Peace Agreement (GPA). One week after the signing of the GPA, the United Nations Security Council approved the establishment of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) to monitor and verify its implementation. ONUMOZ was mandated to overseeing the cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, the creation of a new national army, the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons and the organization of elections.

We deeply appreciate the resolute and decisive involvement of the UN in the peace process, with the mobilisation and allocation of human, material and financial resources. This strong support from the international community, combined with the will and determination of our

people for peace, led to what many regard as the first example of a successful UN peacekeeping mission in Africa.

During the last 12 years of peace, our country has benefited from considerable support from the UN and its various specialized bodies for reconstruction and development activities. This support has been critical for the economic growth and the gradual improvement of the people's living conditions, the country is experiencing today.

In the year 2000, unprecedented floods devastated Mozambique. Those floods affected the central and southern zones of the country, causing heavy losses in human lives and infrastructure. Again, the UN and the international community's response to the disaster were commendable. We take this opportunity, once again, to reiterate our gratitude to both the UN and the international community in general for their unconditional support, without which the losses could have been heavier.

Mr. President,

Our top priority has been the mobilisation of resources for the reduction of absolute poverty in the country, through accelerated economic growth, based on national ownership, sound macro-economic policies, transparency, good governance and attraction of Foreign Direct Investment and critical flows of ODA. Within this context we have adopted the Action Plan for Absolute Poverty Reduction, better known by its Portuguese acronym PARPA.

As a result of sound economic and social policies and an enabling political environment we have been able to record some encouraging progress. Absolute poverty levels decreased from 69.4 per cent in 1997 to 54.1 per cent in 2003. The illiteracy rate fell from 60.5 per cent to 53.6 per cent and women illiteracy rate went down from 74.1 per cent to 68 per cent in the same period. Today, 91.7 per cent of our children have access to primary education, 54 per cent of the population have access to health care, against 74.9 per cent and 40.1 per cent in 1997 respectively. From 1997 to 2003, the real average GDP growth was 8 per cent.

We wish to recognize the critical role played by our development partners in assisting our country as it embarks on its steady progress. Their continued assistance will be critical to ensure sustainability and irreversibility of the political, economic and social gains made thus far.

The achievements recorded up to date have been possible due to the prevailing peace and stability in the country. In fact, Mozambique has been hailed as a post-conflict peace-building success. We have learned how important and essential peace is for our economy and for our lives. In Mozambique, peace brought stability and progress, allowing us to resume our development plans.

Mr. President,

The pandemic of the HIV/AIDS in Mozambique is a growing threat to sustainable development and, together with Malaria, Tuberculosis and Cholera, it is jeopardising decades of economic and social development. Without an aggressive response, by 2020 in Mozambique, 20 per cent of the agricultural labour force will be lost to HIV/AIDS, and it is estimated that the life expectancy will drop to 36 years by 2010.

In recognition of the magnitude of this pandemic and as part of our national strategy to combat HIV/AIDS we launched this year an emergency program, in partnership with civil society and the business community.

The success of our efforts in this area will require the strengthening of our health systems with qualified personnel and appropriate equipment and funding so as to enable them to provide quality health care. Therefore, international assistance will be critical in ensuring the achievement of the required qualitative health care.

Mr President,

Africa has been making important strides towards its renaissance and ownership of its destiny, within the framework of the African Union and its programmatic vision, the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). In that endeavour, we have witnessed the further strengthening of democracy in the continent with the successful holding of orderly elections in Guinea-Bissau, South Africa, Malawi, and Comoros. We must also celebrate the progress made in the consolidation of peace and stability in Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sao Tome and Principe that constitute critical steps towards long-lasting recovery in our Continent.

The vision of African leaders of shaping the African Union with bodies capable of fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of our peoples continued to gain momentum. As a matter of fact, during the last 12 months we established the Pan-African Parliament, the Peace and Security Council and approved the Statutes of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). We are confident that these organs will be instrumental in ensuring full participation of the African peoples in dealing with the countless challenges that Africa is confronted with, in the process of integration of our continent.

Moreover, Africa has been increasingly discharging its responsibility with regard to seeking the maintenance of peace and stability in the continent. We congratulate ourselves with the success of the first African peace operation, the African Mission for Burundi (AMIB), while also commending the United Nations for assuming its responsibilities by deploying the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB).

While recognising the UN achievements in peacekeeping missions, our experience leads us to the conclusion that in peacekeeping operations, post-conflict peace building, strong co-operation and collaboration among all stakeholders, directly or indirectly involved in the peace process, is of paramount importance.

Within the framework of forging partnership, it is important to ensure the existence of regional capabilities in peacekeeping operations that could allow a timely and decisive intervention in countries concerned. To this end, there is a need to intensify the UN focus on Africa and on African peacekeeping capacities, particularly in providing more flexible financial assistance, allocating additional resources and in supporting training.

The issue of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) is of crucial importance, for if left unattended or incomplete can constitute a source of instability, as we have witnessed in some peacekeeping operations.

Mr. President,

Today, we are building self-confidence around Africa and creating the necessary conditions for sustainable development, mainly peace, stability and good political, economic and corporate governance. Through NEPAD we raise the ownership spirit surrounding African leaders to bring about significant changes in Africa's development. The recognition that success can only be achieved by a partnership among all stakeholders is a step forward in the establishment of the public-private partnership, regional integration and co-operation among different regions in Africa.

One of the instruments created to evaluate performance is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), through which peers ensure that the policies and practices of participating States comply with the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards, and achieve mutually agreed objectives in socio-economic development contained in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance.

We would like to commend the decision of the Secretary-General to appoint an Advisory Panel on International Support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Mr. President,

In the last few years, we have witnessed global action towards the materialisation of MDGs around the world. In that endeavour, we have registered mixed signs with encouraging developments and visible setbacks.

We have seen a strong determination by developing countries to achieve MDGs, through relevant domestic actions and policies in that regard. However, despite this clear commitment to the improvement of the living conditions of our respective peoples, our goals may not be realised, mainly due to unfavourable international environment, including insufficient flows of Official Development Assistance and Foreign Domestic Investment.

Consequently, we are globally failing in the creation of the necessary conditions for the achievement of MDGs. We are not being able to achieve the required 3 per cent economic growth world-wide for reducing poverty by half by 2015, with Sub-Saharan Africa recording a disappointing level of economic growth.

The flow of financial resources for the most needed regions is decreasing. Market access remains a challenge for both developing and developed countries. Pandemic diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS are aggressively eroding the productive capacity of developing countries.

We therefore need a concerted global action to effectively address these challenges.. The yesterday meeting of world leaders on "Action against hunger and poverty", held here at the UN, was an encouraging renewal of the commitment of the international community to make MDGs a reality. The adopted final declaration should be the guide of our collective action against hunger and poverty.

Mr. President,

While some progress has been made in creating an enabling international environment for the development of the Least Developed Countries, there are still major challenges we are faced with, particularly in the areas of finance, investment, technology, trade and aid.

The Monterrey Consensus recognises the urgent need to enhance coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems. It also underlines the importance of improving global economic governance. In this regard, the participation of developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries need to be enhanced in the global governance framework, including through economic dialogue and decision-making.

Globalisation, interdependence and closer economic relations have emerged as major trends in global politics. It is imperative to manage, these processes in a way that would ensure equitable development and prevent the continuation of marginalization of the weak and vulnerable nations world-wide. Our universal organisation must offer us the best means and ways for meeting the social, economic and political needs of our peoples.

Mr. President,

There is a growing recognition and acknowledgement that the United Nations is facing new challenges in a rapidly changing world. I have no doubt that the United Nations, under the able leadership of our Secretary General, is dealing with these challenges in a consistent and determined manner whether in Africa or elsewhere in the world. Never before, have we seen the involvement of the UN in so many countries and in various activities towards development.

The success of the on-going reforms should be measured against an effective improvement of the global governance and strengthening of multilateralism, with the General Assembly assuming a central role in the conduct of global issues. The UN should pursue a multilateral approach that truly reflect the current realities of the world, rather than entrench the anachronism inherited from the end of World War II.

Indeed, co-operation, stability, peace and security in the new millennium require that nations conduct themselves as global citizens. The demand for such a conduct should be made on both developing and developed countries and alike.

The current reforms at the United Nations will reinforce its principle of providing better services to member states particularly those most in need. From these reforms will emerge a stronger United Nations with a clear focus on developing countries. A strong United Nations should stand on the pillars of real multilateralism, where each country can have a say on global issues. Failure to cater for the interests and aspirations of the majority of its member states will only result in the marginalization of the UN.

As I leave Office, I urge you to continue the process of reforms of our organization, in order to have a Security Council which is democratic, representative, equitable and transparent. I urge you to continue with the agenda for economic and social development.

It is our earnest hope that the report to be presented by the Secretary General and the recommendations therein will meet the consensus from member states, for only consensus will enable us to reform and strengthen our organisation to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Mr. President,

I feel honoured for having shared experiences with Your Excellencies. I will keep and cherish memories of long and difficult, but gratifying moments that we spent together, building consensus around vital issues for our Organisation and, indeed, our world. They were precious moments of learning, of individual and collective enrichment.

I express my profound gratitude to the UN family and the all support they have given to me and to my country. I plead for the continuation of this solidarity to Mozambique, with the aim of eradicating poverty, hunger and endemic diseases.

I leave with a sense of having fulfilled my duty and given my humble contribution to the cause of liberation, peace and development of Mozambique, Africa and the World as a whole.

The goal of complete decolonisation has not yet been fulfilled, as 16 Non-Self Governing Territories are not yet decolonised. We continue to look for the day when the Agenda of the General Assembly will no longer contemplate neither colonies nor Non-Self Governing Territories.

I look forward to a successful 59<sup>th</sup> Session, one in which we will focus on the priority actions for the year and years ahead. Whatever we do, we must be able to give real hope to our nations and peoples. Hope not just to live, but also to live well and safe; hope not only to continue to be free, but to be free in decency and dignity.

I thank you!

New York, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2004