



SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY JOSÉ ULISSES DE PINA CORREIA E SILVA
PRIME MINISTER, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AND HEAD OF DELEGATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CABO VERDE
AT THE HIGH LEVEL WEEK OF THE 72ND SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 22, 2017

Mr. President of the General Assembly

Mr. Secretary General

Excellences Heads of State, of Government and of Delegation

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great satisfaction and honor that I take part in this august Assembly, gathered here at its 72nd session.

I bring with me the friendly greetings of the Cabo Verdean People living in the country and in the diaspora.

I wanted to salute the President of the 71st session of the General Assembly, Mr. **Peter Thomson**, who focused his leadership on implementing the sustainable development goals.

I am pleased to reiterate the congratulations of my Government to Mr. **António Guterres** for his election to the post of Secretary-General. The Government of Cabo Verde will lend its full support to the Secretary-General's work, especially in carrying out the reforms he has announced—and which are in progress—to strengthen the delivery capacity, transparency and accountability of our Organization.

I would like to welcome the President of the 72nd session of the General Assembly, Mr. **Miroslav LAJČÁK**, and to wish him all the success. We listened with particular interest to the six-point-program he announced for his presidency, and which are all interlinked and geared towards ensuring the protection, dignity and well-being of people.

Indeed, the theme proposed by Your Excellency for the 72nd session could not be more appropriate, given the underlying objective of your program—bringing the United Nations ever closer to the people.

Cabo Verde prides itself on being a Nation with five and a half centuries of history, having built a Creole identity of its own at the junction between Africa and Europe, while also being open to the world, with a significant diaspora in several countries, and the embodiment of the peaceful coexistence, we wish to see in all nations.

As a small island country, with sparse natural resources and devoid of mineral resources, we know that we can only affirm ourselves in the concert of nations and in the global economic system with political, institutional and social stability; with cosmopolitanism; by being trustworthy in our relations with development partners and investors; by upholding the values of democracy, freedom, human dignity and full citizenship; by the quality of our institutions and the excellence of our human resources. Although intangible, these are our greatest assets, and are the foundation of our development process.

Our only option is to value these assets, to make them distinctive and focused on those who truly are development actors and beneficiaries: the children, youths, women and men of any country.

I raise these points in agreement with how appropriate it is to “Focus on People”. Women and men in any country need political, institutional, social, economic and educational environments that release their creative energy, their capacity for innovation, capacity to learn, to work, to cooperate and to trust, to self-organize and to be accountable. This is only possible in environments of peace and security, and which create a notion of the future in people, as opposed to simply living each day at a time, beset with unease and limited horizons.

Mr. President

The People and Government of Cabo Verde are concerned with the current international context, where not only old disputes persist, but also where we witness new internal political crises, armed conflicts, terrorist acts, organized crime of trafficking in drugs, in people, in weapons and piracy, as well as other transnational ideological trends, such as populism, racial supremacy, xenophobia and intolerance to human and cultural diversity.

These damages are detrimental to global peace as they cause human suffering, claim lives and instigate other humanitarian tragedies, such as the unprecedented increase in the number of refugees, hunger, and forms of violence against women and children. Likewise, they undermine the Rule of Law, weaken democracy, threaten the territorial integrity of States, corrupt the basis for economic and social progress, and endanger coexistence at both the national and international levels.

These damages, unfortunately, do not spare any region in a globalized world.

The threats to security are global, the challenges too. The opportunities for their effective combat are also global, and a permanent representation of Africa in the Security Council is therefore fully justified. The Government of Cabo Verde supports a Reform of the Security Council to have it reflect the evolution of today's world by integrating a permanent representation of Africa in its broad composition. In our view, considering that the positions of both sides have already been sufficiently advanced, we believe that it is time to start negotiations based on a text.

Mr. President

Thanks to the United Nations, humanity has for the first time a holistic and comprehensive Agenda that offers a real opportunity for sustainable and inclusive development. Not only because it integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, but also because it considers the cross-cutting issues of peace, security, justice and necessary partnerships, and also because it makes an appeal to «leave no one behind».

Now, two years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the challenges lie in its implementation.

The United Nations must therefore be able to play a catalytic role in forming consensus and mobilizing resources to make a difference on the implementation, funding, and capacity building fronts.

In this regard, we would like to commend the Secretary-General's ongoing exercise, which aims to adapt the United Nations development system, as well as reform the Secretariat's management structures to fit the challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs.

In the same vein, intense focus should be placed on the particular situation of middle-income countries, including Small Island Developing States that have graduated, such as Cabo Verde. There is a lack of a common response approach to this category of countries in terms of new metrics for a more systemic assessment of their financing needs and structural vulnerabilities.

Mr. President,

For Small Island Developing States, a swift and rapid implementation of the Paris Climate Change Agreement is a priority. It must be a priority for the whole world.

Cabo Verde expresses its solidarity with the victims of recent hurricanes in Texas, Florida; Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti, Barbuda, St. Bartholomew, San Martin and other fantastic islands in the Caribbean.

If there have always been hurricanes, the bad news is that with climate change they tend to be more frequent, more cruel and more destructive. The consequences are devastating for regions and countries that are most vulnerable from an environmental and economic point of view, such as small island states and regions. Every new day is late for vigorous and globalized action on the factors that trigger and accelerate climate change. Each island that disappear because of climate change will be a nightmare for humanity.

Mr. President

For Cabo Verde, the Rule of Law and democracy are not only an option, but also above all, a necessity to ensure objective, transparent and predictable governance, both nationally and internationally.

The internal order of Cabo Verde is aligned with international positions and practices in the field of Human Rights through the Constitution of the Republic, its laws, institutions, public policies and social practices.

We recognize, however, that there have been difficulties within the United Nations in harmonizing positions for the universalization of Human Rights principles and practices, and that we must pursue that objective through dialogue and respect between Parties.

In this regard, I would like to emphasize the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a Pact with Member States, as well as a Circle of Leadership on the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in all UN operations — and, above all, in the context of peacekeeping and humanitarian actions. That initiative will give greater dignity to the most vulnerable people, especially women and girls, and will promote their rights.

A supporter of international relations governed by International Law, Cabo Verde actively participates in the codification of laws by joining and taking part in negotiations, as well as by signing, ratifying and implementing most of the international instruments in the most varied domains.

In this context, Cabo Verde has recently deposited the instruments of ratification of the Paris Agreement on climate change, and signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was concluded in New York on July 7th, 2017.

We would like to convey our satisfaction with the success of the preparatory work towards developing an international legal instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Moreover, we support the convening of a Diplomatic Conference during 2018 to work on a Convention on this issue, which should have safeguards for the specific situation of Small Island States.

The conclusion of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was a historic moment in the fight against impunity for those responsible for the most serious crimes against humanity, and we would therefore like to express the strongest support of Cabo Verde to the ICC. Strengthening this Court is an obligation the present generation has towards future ones.

Mr. President,

As written by the poet and songwriter, and later sung by the Diva Cesária Évora, Cabo Verde is described as being «ten little grains of sand» in the middle of the Atlantic.

Despite our smallness, we want to make Cabo Verde a country with relevance in the Middle Atlantic in terms of economic stature, security, and diplomacy for peace and the promotion of freedom and democracy.

We intend to position Cabo Verde as a transit hub in the Middle Atlantic for tourism, air transport, port operations, financial and investment operations, business localization and business development in the Digital and Nano-Technological Economy, and in the attraction of investments and skills from the diaspora.

Cabo Verde promotes collective and cooperative security systems, as the transnational nature of crime and the location of the country so require.

Cabo Verde aims to position itself as a useful interlocutor in the concert of nations for dialogue, peace and tolerance. Its history and location have transformed Cabo Verde into a country resulting from mergers between Europe and Africa—a country of easy relations with all the countries of the world. We want to value and develop these assets strategically.

This is our vision and purpose. They are captured in the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development (PEDS), which is already completed and aligned with the SDGs.

Partnerships are an integral and indispensable part of the 2030 Agenda, and national ownership will find in them an unquestionable complement so that the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development can succeed, with the United Nations at the forefront.

Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary General

Excellences

Ladies and Gentlemen

Happiness is the ultimate right to which the people of the whole world aspire. The 2030 Agenda has endowed the World not only with a Vision, but also a Roadmap to bring happiness to the people and leave no one behind in the path to sustainable development.

In 1945, the Peoples of the United Nations showed their determination to lead Humanity in a different course than War. Today, with the 2030 Agenda, they will be able to determine another course for Humanity, for People who still struggle with poverty and the absence of alternatives for their development.

It is in our hands—the Peoples of the United Nations—to support both the Secretary-General and the President of the 72nd session of the General Assembly in this honorable and grandiose task of advancing the Happiness Agenda.

A great THANK YOU to everyone.