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and sanitation. The fight against extreme poverty, affecting more than 70 per cent of the population as of 1997, is, and should be one of the priority tasks of the leadership of the country. HIV/AIDS pandemic constitutes a serious threat to the stability and advancement of the country. According to the latest reports, up to 16 per cent of the adult population in Mozambique is infected by the disease and a ten percent loss in the population is expected by the year 2010. Life expectancy would have declined from 50 to 36 years. It is another area which requires special attention and dedication.

Since the first historic multi party elections in Mozambique in 1994, the country made significant achievements in consolidating its democracy and implementing a comprehensive economic reform program. There are visible signs of structural economic transformation and a sound political climate is starting to emerge as democratic institutions and civil society gain strength.

I would like to wish the Government and people of Mozambique further successes in their difficult task of maintaining stability and capacity building in their country and I want to assure you that the United Nations will remain actively involved in securing the achievements and support for further development.

Thank you.