



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

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,

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.

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 21st 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.