

Mr President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by saying that I am pleased to see Nicaragua, in the person of His Excellency Minister Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, chair this 63rd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Cameroon wishes him success in the discharge of his duties and assures him of its full collaboration.

I want also to pay deserved tribute to Ambassador Kerim for skilfully chairing deliberations of the 62nd session.

Lastly, I salute His Excellency Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations and restate our appreciation and support for his remarkable efforts in discharging his lofty mission.

Mr President,

By proposing "The impact of the global food crisis on poverty and hunger in the world as well as the need to democratize the United Nations" as main theme of the general debate at this 63rd session, you focused our deliberations on core problems currently faced by the international community.

I strongly support this proposal all the more as Cameroon, like other countries throughout the world, recently experienced social upheavals, provoked by the high cost of living.

On that occasion, we decided on and implemented a series of corrective measures, ranging from a reduction of taxes and customs duties on some basic commodities to an increase of the salaries of State employees and the stabilization of fuel prices.

These measures which were lauded by the The International Monetary Fund undoubtedly had positive effects. They however did not totally eliminate a problem with a global import and which calls for equally global responses.

In fact, the food crisis which is one of its manifestations, has taken worrying proportions throughout the world. All economies,

irrespective of their sizes, but particularly those of poor countries, are affected. The most vulnerable populations are forced to forego health care and education to feed themselves.

If appropriate responses are not rapidly found, there will be reason to fear dramatic repercussions on international trade, economic growth, social progress, political stability and hence global security.

It is therefore an urgent necessity to act rapidly and collectively. We believe an appropriate response to this situation lies in ensuring coordination at the highest level.

That is why I salute the fact that the Secretary-General of the United Nations took the initiative to establish a Task Force on the Global Food Crisis, whose aim is to promote a coherent and unified response to the crisis. Cameroon shares the vision contained in the global action framework prepared by the Task Force.

In fact, we are of the opinion that a lasting solution to the crisis requires short- and medium-term actions, including notably increased food aid and investment in agriculture, the promotion of social welfare initiatives, reduction of agricultural subsidies in developed countries and restrictions on food exports from countries of the south.

It is obvious that such solutions can not be implemented without the participation of all and without the establishment of global partnerships on food and agriculture, involving all players concerned, namely governments, the private sector, civil society, donors and international institutions.

Mr President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the mid-term assessment of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is being conducted, the global food crisis appears as one of the major challenges the international community will have to face.

In that regard, Cameroon wishes to join the United Nations Secretary-General in appealing for financing of the measures recommended by the Task Force.

However acute the food crisis may be, it is far from being the only snag in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

Concerning Africa in particular, there are many other challenges, such as persistent poverty, peace and security issues, as well as the effects of climate change.

Concerning poverty alleviation, our continent placed a lot of hope in globalization which it supported in good faith, despite the legitimate fears it could nurture concerning the globalization of trade. It should be acknowledged that, on the whole, these hopes were dashed.

Without returning to the global food crisis, it is obvious that Africa felt the negative effects of the international financial crisis and the exponential oil price hikes, all of which were phenomena beyond its control. In addition, it helplessly watched the erosion of official development assistance and the failure of the Doha Round negotiations where its interests were relegated to the background. This role of powerless onlooker can only cause deep frustration and cast doubts on its chances of achieving, within the set deadlines, the Millennium Development Goals.

Nevertheless, Africa wants to believe that the international community will not give up assisting it to come out of poverty and under-development. That is why we fully appreciate the initiative of the United Nations to organize high-level meetings devoted to the development of our continent, on the sidelines of this session.

As it were, on the economic front, Africa's immense potential remains largely untapped. But, although many African countries have been recording generally good economic performance, the continent remains the poorest on the planet. Hence, the need for increased solidarity of the international community.

The growing impact of climate change in Africa especially is particularly disturbing. In this area on which depends, more than

elsewhere, the fate of future generations, there is an urgent need for a joint action by the international community.

Such solidarity should also be shown in the handling of the issue of migrants. The tragedies they experience are, to put it bluntly, inhuman. The atrocities and acts of discrimination they endure on a daily basis are intolerable. There is urgent need to jointly seek solutions to check this exodus which drains Africa of the human resources it greatly needs. There is no gainsaying that the economic development of the continent is the one and only solution to this painful problem.

As regards peace and security, perhaps more than in any other area, Africa needs the active solidarity of the international community. There is reason to be satisfied with the progress made in several countries that were hitherto plagued by deadly confrontations, though it should be acknowledged that many hotbeds of tension and conflict still exist on the continent.

Here, the peace agreements signed after lengthy negotiations are yet to fully enter into force. There, force is used to jeopardize democratic achievements.

Continuing confrontations in Somalia, the chronic instability along the borders of Chad, the Central African Republic and the Sudan, the daily tragedy faced by the population of Darfur, the recurrent eruption of violence in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Burundi, are all cause for serious concern.

Our continent is, unfortunately, not also spared by the threat of terrorism which has henceforth taken a global dimension. I am convinced that only global and resolute action will help address this issue. Cameroon will contribute its quota as necessary.

The international community and the United Nations in particular are making commendable efforts to promote peace in Africa. This is why the Organization must receive from all its members the resources that it needs to ensure effectiveness of its action. To that end, it should constantly express the common will and continue to be the crucible of the democratization of international relations.

Mr President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The historic achievement recorded in the settlement of the dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula is one of the best examples of the remarkable results that can be generated by an authentic desire for peace that is shared by the parties, with the judicious support of the international community.

The ceremony which established on 14 August 2008 in Calabar the withdrawal of the Nigerian administration and police force from Bakassi, as well as the transfer of authority to Cameroon is undoubtedly due to the attachment of the leaders and peoples of both countries to peace.

I wish, in this respect, to express my profound gratitude to friendly countries for the support they continued to give to the implementation of the ruling of the International Court of Justice and to the Greentree Agreement. I wish to thank in particular the Witness States of the Agreement, namely, the United States of America, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United Kingdom.

The UNO also played a decisive role in the settlement of this matter. The tireless efforts of the Secretaries-General, Koffi Annan and Ban Ki-Moon, and their representatives within the Mixed Commission, deserve our recognition.

It is, thus, the dawn of a new era in relations between Cameroon and Nigeria, geared towards the quest for progress and development to which our two peoples aspire. It goes without saying that the two countries must henceforth do everything possible to consolidate the settlement and seize the opportunities offered them to develop their relations in all areas. In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that Cameroon will respect all its commitments.

Mr President,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The delay in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals should spur us to redouble our efforts to carry out vigorous,

joint and mutually supportive actions in poverty reduction and development.

The Government of Cameroon is resolutely committed towards achieving this goal. I wish to pay homage to our population for the sacrifices they made in this respect, as well as to bilateral and multilateral partners for the multifaceted assistance they provided to us. This assistance is very invaluable to us, particularly in our efforts to promote better management of public resources. We have, within this framework, launched a fierce fight against dishonest managers which we intend to pursue ruthlessly.

Guided by the concern to improve the wellbeing of our people, we reaffirm from this rostrum, our determination to relentlessly pursue our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

To successfully perform this task, we know we can count on the understanding and support of the United Nations.

Thank you for your attention.