



REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION

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Statement

by

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of the
Republic of Mozambique

High-Level Segment

of the

61st Session of the Commission on Human Rights

Geneva, March 2005

Your Excellency
Mr. Makarim Wibisono
Chairperson of the 61st Session of the Commission on
Human Rights,

Your Excellency
Madame Louise Arbour
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Distinguished Members of the Commission on Human Rights

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to express my sincere congratulations to you Mr. Chairperson and to all members of the bureau for your well deserved election to preside over the deliberations of the 61st session of the Commission on Human Rights.

I pledge my delegation's full support to the Chair for a fruitful conclusion of the work of the present session.

Our congratulations are also extended to His Excellency Ambassador Michael Smith, whose zeal and dedication contributed enormously in the successful outcome of the 60th Session of the Commission on Human Rights last year.

My delegation wishes to seize this opportunity to congratulate, in special manner, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Madame Louise Arbour, for her firm commitment and readiness as she took over the difficult task of steering the destinies of this Commission, in the aftermath of the tragic incident that led to the premature departure of the late Dr. Sergio Vieira de Mello in Baghdad last year.

Madame High Commissioner, we are confident that with your outstanding experience and wisdom, our Commission is gifted with a very able leadership for the fulfilment of the goals pursued by this institution.

Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and privilege for me to address this August Assembly for the first time on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique.

Indeed, I am a humble messenger of the new government of Mozambique, the government that ensued following the country's general elections held last December.

Mozambique has been making encouraging strides in the past ten years, thanks mainly to the firm determination of our people in its quest for moving ahead by pulling together in concert with the combined efforts of the international Community.

The message articulated by the new government clearly proclaims the fundamental principle of continuity of action on the on-going development programs, stresses government's readiness to fully respect all international commitments to which Mozambique is a party.

Guided by the letter and spirit of the provisions enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Government of Mozambique attaches an utmost importance to the work of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights.

We strongly believe that our commitment to the global agenda on human rights must be guided by the ethics which govern the code of conduct among sovereign States. We highly cherish the culture of peace and democracy as the '*sine qua non*' basic conditions for the full enjoyment of human rights.

Mr. Chairperson

Amid a myriad of serious development challenges denying our people from the full enjoyment of their human rights, His Excellency President Armando Emilio Guebuza has outlined a set of priorities to which the government has to address with immediate effect in the on-going five years development programme.

In short those priorities are essentially aimed at improving, 'first hand', the basic human conditions of our people.

As a matter of fact, the President is profoundly convinced that in the next five years, the government can strive to provide the minimum basic conditions of a decent life to its people if we hopefully succeed in tackling the following priorities:

- The eradication of absolute poverty and in particular, the eradication of hunger
- Ensure primary education for all our children throughout the country
- Promotion of gender equality
- Reduction of infant mortality and ensure gradual improvement of maternal health-care
- Redouble efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other endemic diseases

- Address corruption and bureaucracy that undermine the fundamental ethics of transparency and good governance.
- Fostering of sustainable and comprehensive economic growth, with emphasis on human development, rural development and the promotion of women's participation in the country's political, economic and social life.

Excellencies,

The protection and promotion of human rights in Mozambique is one of the main features outlined in the government programme, in recognition of the constitutional principle of equality of the Mozambican citizens before the law, regardless of their colour of skin, sex, ethnic origin, marital status, religious belief, social position, profession or political affiliation.

The new Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique of 2004 enshrines the position of Ombudsman whose primary function is to guarantee the citizens' rights, defend legality and justice in Public Administration acts. Along with this Constitution, Mozambique is in the process of putting into practice other legal instruments to guarantee the people's enjoyment of their fundamental rights and to promote good governance and the respect of the rule of law.

With regard to good governance, the government will prioritise popular participation in decision-making process, enforce transparency in the management of the public property and periodical accountability. Corruption, in all its forms and manifestations, will be tackled through political, penal and judicial measures.

The international Community is called upon to back up these efforts with a view to ensuring the translation into did of the above-mentioned priorities which conform with the basic requirements for the full enjoyment, full promotion and protection of human rights in the country.

Needless to recall that the broad main areas of action of my government's program are essentially based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We are all aware that the implementation of this program is largely dependent upon the participation of the entire family of nations who set the goals and committed to work together for the materialization of this longing goals outlined in that historic conference.

**Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the forthcoming months the Government of Mozambique will embark on ratification of several international instruments on Human Rights, namely, the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

At regional level, the government will remain actively involved in the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights and the Committee of Experts Related to Rights and Well-being of the Child in Africa.

We will also work in the ratification of the United Nations and the African Union's legal instruments within the framework of the Human Rights.

Apart from the ratification of the aforesaid instruments, my government will continue to work towards the adoption of a domestic legal framework for the implementation of the international legal instruments to which the Republic of Mozambique is a state party.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we recognize that the task before us is monumental and I would like, therefore, to reiterate my Government's determination and commitment to continue to work with the Office of the High Commissioner for the promotion and defence of human rights, not only in Mozambique, but also on a global framework. We would be remiss, however, if we fail from this important gathering to call for the implementation of the Durban Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted there upon.

Thank you for your kind attention