



## HH Presidential Archive

HAKAINDE HICHILEMA — 7TH PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

# Address to the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

**Date:** 28 September 2024

**Location:** United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA

**Occasion:** High-Level Segment of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

**Delivered by:** Hon. Mulambo Haimbe, SC, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, on behalf of the President

YOUR EXCELLENCY PHILEMON YANG, PRESIDENT OF THE 79TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY;

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, ANTONIO GUTERRES;

DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT;

HONOURABLE MINISTERS;

HEADS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS;

EXCELLENCIES;

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I congratulate you, Your Excellency on assumption of the Presidency of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and assure you of Zambia's cooperation during your tenure.

We extend Zambia's sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Dennis Francis for the exemplary work exhibited during the 78th Session.

Mr. President,

The theme for this session, “Leaving no one behind: Acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for present and future generations” presents an opportunity for us to re-examine our priorities, redefine our mission, and sharpen our vision as we approach the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations.

Zambia, therefore, joins the UN Secretary General in congratulating Member States for successfully adopting the Pact for the Future which includes the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. We further appreciate the work of Namibia and Germany for co-facilitating this process. It is our hope that the implementation of the Pact for the Future will address the multiple crises facing the World today.

Mr. President,

Zambia firmly believes that multilateralism is the only viable approach to solving regional and international challenges. In this regard, the creation of the United Nations almost 80 years ago provided new hope for the international community in the maintenance of international peace and security, promotion of justice and improvement of living conditions for all people. However, this ideal is rapidly slipping away as global peace is increasingly threatened by the growing and sustained geopolitical tensions.

As Member States that share in the ideals upon which the United Nations was founded, we must resolve to correct this course and uphold the principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

The impact of conflict in some parts of the world has been felt across Africa through disruptions, soaring prices of key commodities such as energy and other inputs of trade and production, resulting in increased cost of living. Zambia like many other developing countries which are predominantly import-dependent, has not been spared. It is therefore, crucial that we address the root causes and structural drivers of conflict and promote peacebuilding efforts.

Mr. President,

At regional level, Zambia held the chairmanship of Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation for the period August 2023 to August 2024 and therefore, played a crucial role in the region in that capacity.

Overall, the security and political situation in the region remains stable. However, there are still pockets of security challenges in some of our Member States such as the situation in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Cabo Delgado Province in Mozambique which SADC remains seized with.

We implore the international community to support the various peacebuilding efforts in the DRC. We further call for support to the Government of Mozambique in order to ensure that the exit of the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), does not result in reversal of the gains made by the Mission.

Furthermore, Zambia recognises the efforts of His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola as the African Union Mediator in the facilitation of the Luanda process aimed at restoring Peace and Security in the Eastern DRC as well as the Nairobi Process that equally aims at fostering peace in the DRC.

Mr. President,

Climate Change and extreme weather conditions threaten the very existence and balance of the world as we know it. It is clear that efforts to raise the standard of living for the world's poor are being adversely affected by the effects of Climate Change. For instance, this year, Zambia experienced the worst drought in recent times. This led the Government to declare the drought as a national disaster and emergency to save lives and safeguard livelihood.

The drought has adversely affected water-dependent sectors such as agriculture and energy. Equally, household incomes, nutrition, human health and the environment have been adversely affected. Furthermore, reduced agricultural productivity and low hydroelectric power generation have consequently slowed down our economic growth. This year, about fifty percent of Zambia's population was at risk of food insecurity.

We take this opportunity to thank all our bilateral and multilateral partners who graciously responded to the clarion call to support Zambia's Drought Response Strategy.

This, and similar scenarios in our region, underscore the need to build local resilience and climate adaptation through various interventions including, among others, climate financing from both public and private sources. In this regard, the need for the full

actualisation of the Loss and Damage Fund to help developing countries cope with climate related disasters and extreme weather events cannot be overemphasized. We urge Member States to focus their energies on achieving measurable outcomes at the forthcoming COP29 accordingly.

Mr. President,

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the SDGs may not be met by 2030 as only 17 percent of the SDGs targets are on track, while the remaining 83 percent are either stagnated or regressing. Therefore, Zambia joins calls for massive investment and scaled-up action in order to close the financing gap which is currently estimated to be around \$4 trillion. Failure to close this gap will adversely impact future generations.

In the same vein, we call on the International Community to scale up financing for developing countries to achieve the SDGs, including honouring commitments to contribute at least 0.7 percent of Gross National Income towards Official Development Assistance.

Further, the heavy burden of debt in some developing countries presents another major hurdle to the attainment of the SDGs especially in Africa. These countries face a high risk of debt distress. There is need, therefore, for an effective debt workout mechanism that supports payment suspensions, longer lending terms, and lower interest rates.

Based on Zambia's experience, we call for further reforms to streamline the existing G-20 Framework for Debt Restructuring in order to enhance certainty and reduce the time it takes to conclude the process.

Zambia further joins calls for the reform of the international financial architecture to make it fit-for-purpose and equitably address the development needs of all countries in the 21st century.

Additionally, there is need to build capacities for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to access other innovative financing measures such as debt-for-climate swaps and green and blue bonds, among others.

Mr. President,

Aggressive tax avoidance and tax evasion have a corrosive effect on public trust, financial integrity, the rule of law and sustainable development across the globe. International tax cooperation could significantly reduce illicit financial flows, a scourge that deprives economies, especially those in the developing world, of critical funding for development. Zambia, therefore, calls for the urgent conclusion of negotiations on the proposed UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation. This will enable developing countries enhance their domestic resource mobilization.

As co-facilitator of the negotiations of the Outcome Document for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in the coming months, we look forward to actively engaging with Member States in the reform of the international architecture.

Mr President,

Science and technology are critical to achieving the SDGs.

Developing countries' lack of access to technology has hindered the implementation of sustainable development practices, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty and inequality.

Hence, there is need to bridge the gap in digital technologies including Artificial Intelligence, to promote efficiencies in health, climate, sustainable infrastructure, energy, agriculture and other global development priorities.

In this regard, we call for enhanced international Cooperation to support developing countries to integrate technology through capacity building, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, information exchange and investments in research and development.

Alongside the Pact of the Future, Member states adopted a Global Digital Compact. Zambia was honoured to partner with Sweden in leading negotiations of this historic document.

The Compact at its core, is designed to close the digital gap, protect human rights online, respond to the rapidly advancing artificial intelligence and create a more inclusive governance framework on digital matters. It is also meant to accelerate efforts towards achieving SDGs. However, it can only deliver its potential if we step forward to implement its commitments.

Mr. President,

As part of its efforts to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs by 2030, Zambia has been implementing policies and programmes aimed at creating a strong and resilient health system, reducing inequalities, eradicating poverty, and empowering women and girls. This is also consistent with the implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action.

Zambia welcomes the declaration on Future Generations which seeks to secure the well-being of future generations, in particular their participation in decision making.

To reap the demographic dividend, Zambia continues to call for significant investments in the growing youth population, currently standing at 82% below the age of 35. Increased investments are needed in education, health and empowerment of young people so that they can meaningfully contribute to the achievement of SDGs.

Mr. President,

Child, early and forced marriage is a harmful practice that disproportionately affects girls, hindering their education, health, and overall well-being.

In this regard, Zambia continues to make strides in the campaign to end Child Marriage by 2030 and safeguard the rights of girls by enacting relevant legislation to address this vice.

President Hakainde Hichilema being the African Union Champion on Ending Child Marriage, Zambia is pleased to report that the campaign is growing from strength to strength, with 32 of the 54 countries on the continent having launched national campaigns to end child marriage. However, much more needs to be done. We call on all partners to join efforts and raise our voices to protect our children to end this harmful practice by 2030.

This year marks the 10th Anniversary since the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution on Ending Child, Early and Forced Marriage co-facilitated by Zambia and Canada. As in previous sessions, we count on support of all delegations during the negotiations of this very important Resolution.

Mr. President,

Zambia is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights in order to ensure that all persons can have full and equal enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Constitution and international human rights instruments Zambia is a party to.

Further, Zambia remains resolute in ensuring that the core principles of human rights such as universality, equality and non-discrimination are upheld. In this regard, Zambia is pleased to indicate its intention to present its candidature for membership to the Human Rights Council for the term 2026 to 2028 during the elections to be held in 2025.

Mr. President,

In the face of the present geopolitical realities and calls to strengthen multilateralism, the need to reform the UN Security Council cannot be over emphasized. Reforms are necessary to make the Security Council better equipped and strengthened in its capacity to discharge its responsibilities of maintaining and safeguarding international peace and security.

The representation of African States in the Permanent Category would correct the historical injustice that has marginalized Africa's voice; and will provide a vital perspective to the Council.

Time has come for the Security Council to be representative, democratic and accountable to all Member States, irrespective of status. This is essential for its integrity as the custodian of international peace. Given that Africa constitutes the second largest bloc of the UN membership, proposals to reform the Security Council should heed Africa's call as espoused in the Common Africa Position as enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

In this regard, we are pleased to note that the African Union Committee of Ten(C-10) and the five Permanent Members (P-5) of the United Nations Security Council had a meeting during this session of the United Nations General Assembly. Such interactions should be encouraged in order to narrow the gap on the Security Council reforms.

Mr. President

Finally, I wish to reaffirm that Zambia remains committed to strengthened multilateralism as a means of addressing the numerous global challenges affecting our people including ending poverty and creating wealth in a sustainable manner. To this end, Mr. President, we should not remain indecisive and indifferent to this serious issue, nor should we forego this opportunity to make the world a better place for all humanity.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the need for us to seriously consider the call for massive investment and scaled-up action if we are to make meaningful progress in achieving the SDGs, including implementation of the Pact for the Future.

I thank you Mr. President.

*Archive note: Official text as circulated by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations.*