



[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Mr. President,

Allow me to extend to you warm congratulations on your election as president of the 59th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. I would like to assure you of our fullest co-operation in the discharge of this heavy responsibility bestowed upon you. I have no doubt that both Gabon and Africa would be proud of the leadership that I know you will provide to this 59th session of the General assembly.

I would also like to commend your predecessor for his invaluable contribution to the success of the 58th session of the General Assembly.

We continue to be deeply grateful to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the great work he has been doing in a variety of areas and at various levels. We are grateful to him at the international level for doing whatever is humanly possible to protect the integrity of the United Nations, and to defend the rule of law. At the level of Africa, we appreciate his commitment to the creation of the political and economic conditions that would generate hope for the revival of the continent. For the sub-region of which Ethiopia is a part, the role of the Secretary-General could have had no substitute. Whether in connection with the effort being

Mr. President,

We in Ethiopia realize full well that at the end of the day nations must assume responsibilities for their future, for their development and for their peace and stability. Ethiopia has no illusion in this regard. We realize fully that in the final analysis it is what Ethiopians do that will shape and determine our future. It is this conviction which is the basis for the various activities currently under way in our country.

What we in Ethiopia face are triple challenges---the need for rapid and fast development; the further deepening of the democratization underway in the country; and ensuring peace and stability, not only within our country, but also throughout our sub-region.

embrace those. Dialogue and negotiation, including using the good offices of the Secretary-General that has been availed to the two parties, is the most realistic and feasible means for the two parties to make progress in the peace process. Ethiopia is ready to go more than half way to make this a reality. But so far it has been left with the proverbial situation of almost trying to clap with one hand. It is our hope that reason will prevail in Eritrea sooner than later.

Mr. President,

The conflict with Eritrea has been for Ethiopia a tragic setback, a waste and a distraction from critical duties both domestic and regional. There is no doubt that its final resolution would afford Ethiopia greater opportunities for playing an even greater role for peace in our sub-region and beyond.

The peace process in Somalia has now come to a very critical point, with the Somalis having now come closer than anytime over the last thirteen years to establishing a government. Ethiopia will continue, as a member of the IGAD Facilitation Committee, to contribute to the achievement of national reconciliation and the rise from the ashes of the Somali state. This is an obligation for Ethiopia and also consistent with the vital interest it has in peace and stability in our sub-region.

That is also why Ethiopia was looking forward to the final consummation of the peace process between the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM/SPLA which has now slowed down because of the tragedy in Darfur, a tragedy which was hardly anticipated. Ethiopia is keen to see the Darfur crisis resolved and the humanitarian tragedy dealt with as speedily as possible. The peace and stability of the Sudan is so critical for our sub-region, Ethiopia would continue to do the best it could, including as a member of the AU peace and Security Council, to assist that sisterly country overcome the challenge it is facing, both in the humanitarian, security, and in the political areas.

Ethiopia's contribution to peace and peace-building is not limited to what we have been doing in our own sub-region. We have from the outset been closely associated with the peace process in the Great Lakes Region, including at the highest level.

Currently, as part of the African Mission initially, and later as part of the United Nations Operations in Burundi, Ethiopia's contingent in Burundi has continued to contribute in a modest way to the success of the peace process in Burundi.

Another modest contribution we are making is related to the effort being made for the restoration of peace in Liberia as part of the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

No doubt, we are also the beneficiaries of the support of so many countries for the operation of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) whose work has been critical for keeping the situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea stable. We are indeed grateful to UNMEE, its personnel at all levels, and to the troop contributing countries.

Mr. President,

We all agree, that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is a crime against humanity.