



REGIONAL OFFICE FOR

**World Health  
Organization**

**Africa**

**AFR/RC60/CONF.DOC/1**

30 August 2010

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA**

**ORIGINAL: SPANISH**

Sixtieth session

Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 30 August–3 September 2010

**SPEECH BY MR FRANCISCO PASCUAL OBAMA ASUE, CABINET MINISTER FOR  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General,  
The WHO Regional Director for Africa,  
His Excellency Professor Alpha Omar Konaré,  
The Representative of the African Union,  
State and Government dignitaries of Equatorial Guinea,  
Honourable ministers and heads of delegation at the Sixtieth session of the Regional Committee,  
Ambassadors and representatives of international institutions,  
The Archbishop of Malabo and Annobon Diocese,  
The Mayor of the city of Malabo,  
The Governor of Bioko-Norte Province,  
Distinguished delegates at the Sixtieth session of the Regional Committee,  
Dear Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with a feeling of pride and satisfaction of a person receiving brothers at his home that I am addressing you today on the occasion of this meeting of ministers of health. I wish you all, ministers, heads of delegation and guests, the warmest welcome and a very pleasant and happy stay in Equatorial Guinea, a legendary country on account of its African hospitality and special and sharp sense of active solidarity with our brothers and friends. I want to draw your attention to a common saying in Equatorial Guinea and perhaps in our entire continent: “If you do not know how the antelope gets along in the bush, it suffices to see how the goat does it in the village.” By this, I want to tell you that what you notice in the city of Malabo which is a worksite: broken roads, open trenches, infrastructure works, extension of new electric network lines, etc., and its inhabitants, is exactly what is happening in our entire territory. I therefore crave your indulgence for the troubles and difficulties you may encounter on your way - we are building our nation's great future.

Distinguished participants,

In the context of our continent and our frequent meetings to solve our problems and ensure our development, I think that it is necessary for us to remind ourselves of the meaning and action of those who colonized our people by trying to convince us, up to now, that we are incapable of moving forward alone and solving our problems without them.

But we, starting from Equatorial Guinea, feel that our continent understands, better and better and with greater certainty, that we ourselves, sons of Africa, through our joint efforts, our conviction can alone tread the road to progress and achieve the objectives we have set ourselves so that our continent can restore the respect due it as the cradle of civilization and origin of diverse and varied humanity. Only we ourselves have the solutions to overcome our difficulties.

One of the main challenges to our development is to solve the health problems of our people, given that it is a healthy people who ensure sustainable development and are capable of taking up the major challenges of pursuing its well-being. It is therefore necessary that our meetings explore all the possibilities of finding sound and sustainable solutions to these problems and that, with a single and unique African option, our determination should be firm and unflinching in addressing the difficult task of attaining a health status that is not only stable but also universal for all our people.

This effort must remove artificial barriers namely colonial frontiers, overcome natural ethno-cultural divisions and banish political antagonisms, which are sometimes imposed by our former colonisers, so as to become a revealing action, a call for rebellion against the injustices that we have always suffered in this area and has made us mere consumers of foreign precepts and schemes at a time we are seeking solutions to our major problems.

It is precisely in this new Equatorial Guinea which this month celebrated its 31st anniversary with its own resources and, above all, with the determination to use them for the well-being of its people and our continent that we learnt the lesson that no one can be strong all alone, that our problems are those of our continent, and that our triumphs must also be those of our African brothers.

If, during your stay with us, you travel through this city and parts of the country, you will understand why I talked of “this new Equatorial Guinea”. Whatever you come across is the outcome of the effort of Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, backed by the people; you will see that all is the result of the desire of all the people of Equatorial Guinea to make our nation a modern and new country and, above all, a country in which each citizen realizes his or her dreams and where everyone feels proud to say “we did it by ourselves”.

We have learnt how to share our joy and sorrow, face up to difficulties and not give up in the face of adversity. We started from nothing, from a long way, from when nobody was interested in a small, poor and needy place in Central Africa called Equatorial Guinea; when nobody would give much for our future and when people made the most dismal predictions regarding our destiny. In spite of all that, owing to providence, we now have the resources to pursue our own development; we have therefore fully embraced the challenge to make our land an example of development and progress. Education, health, transport, infrastructure, etc. are steadily and relentlessly being developed significantly across our national territory, in all provinces, districts and municipalities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We, in Equatorial Guinea which is unique and special because of its Hispanic background, in an African context where the majority are Francophones, Anglophones and Lusophones, have to a large extent made a day-to-day effort to promote integration in order to face with fortitude what at the outset should have been a disadvantage; we have learnt to fight relentlessly against adversity and to become stronger in our African identity, in the original cultural dimension which makes us brothers of everyone, in spite of the cultural stereotypes from divisions imposed on our continent; we have learnt lessons from the errors committed in the past to improve our actions

and to better measure the remaining grounds to be covered; we have turned into an advantage the smallness of our territory and the fact that our population is small by encouraging greater cohesion in the country and by transforming ethno-cultural diversity into a beautiful hymn of unity; we have understood that diversity is an asset and not an impediment, that ethnic plurality is a strength to the force of shared action and that our unique Hispanic background on the African continent is a gateway open to us to live in harmony in communion with other cultures, without friction.

The main and most remarkable lesson we have learnt in Equatorial Guinea is that it is only when we are united, not only as a country but also as a unique African entity, that we can face all difficulties with a guarantee of success, solve all our problems and build a better and more secure future for the coming generations.

Dear Guests,

I take delight in informing you that the people of Equatorial Guinea and their legitimate authorities are welcoming you today in a country fully and definitively geared towards its complete fulfilment, a people resolutely determined to be the masters of their own destiny and firmly committed to not ceding its sovereignty to anything inimical to its noble aspiration and to fighting to live in peace, build its country and be more actively part of this African continent which is awakening and which is, more than ever before, decided to be ONE in its effort to govern itself and pursue progress designed, structured and controlled by itself.

That is a battle the people of Equatorial Guinea are ready to fight against disinformation and against those who cunningly, hiding themselves behind theories, assumptions and principles poisoned by their pernicious appetites, try to sell a different and negative image of our country on ignoble rumour markets.

We are far from solving all the problems of all the people of Equatorial Guinea, a feat which no country or regime in the world has ever succeeded in achieving. However, we are encouraged by the firm determination of our Head of State, His Excellency Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, to continue to strive to achieve most of the key objectives set by our country by 2020.

Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates,

I am making an appointment with you. So, see you again soon. I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Long live health - long live international cooperation!

Thank you.