On behalf of the people and the government of Mozambique, I congratulate Your Excellency on your election as President of the World Summit for Social Development. I thank the people and the government of Denmark for the warm hospitality accorded to us since our arrival as well as for the excellent working conditions which, we hope, will contribute to the successful outcome of our deliberations.

We also wish to express our appreciation to His Excellency Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary General of the United Nations, for his efforts to convene this Summit in order to allow the leaders of the world an opportunity to share their views on crucial issues of social development.

Indeed, the worsening of the situation of poverty world-wide, the continued increase of unemployment rates, the adverse social costs deriving from economic restructuring, the breakdown of the social tissue, the environmental degradation, the political instability and armed conflicts all-in-all, represent a serious blow to humankind's aspirations for development.

It is high time that we thought back on the prevailing strategies and models of development.

It is imperative, therefore, that we deploy every effort so that this historic Summit remains recorded as a collective commitment to a vision of people's centred development, for the eradication of poverty, unemployment, and for social integration. At this juncture, it is clear that there can be no solution of the global social problems in developed countries without the solution of socio-economic problems of the developing countries. To that end, additional measures must be taken by the international community, in order to support the efforts being carried out by developing countries in their quest for development.
This Summit's agenda deals with issues of great relevance to my country which has just emerged from 16 years of war. The war has disrupted the organisation of life of our people. Hundreds of schools and health care facilities were destroyed. Over one million and eight hundred thousand persons were forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and an additional four million and five hundred thousand became internally displaced. This situation, by and large, made unfeasible all socio-economic programmes the government was implementing, thus, contributing for an overall worsening of poverty which hit about two thirds of the population.

The exodus from the countryside to the cities in search for shelter and means of survival led to high rates of unemployment and under-employment, resulting in a serious social crisis and environmental degradation.

With the end of war in 1992, following the signing of the General Peace Agreement, peace prevails in my country. Multiparty elections were held in October 1994 and have been recognised by the international community as just, free, and fair. Multiparty democracy is a reality today in Mozambique. Now we are about to conclude the process of repatriation of refugees and the resettlement of internally displaced persons. We are working towards the reintegration of demobilised soldiers and of social groups severely affected by war namely, the traumatised children and the handicapped.

The reduction and eradication of poverty, the improvement of the quality of life of the population with greater emphasis over the most unfavoured social strata, education, health, employment and job creation, all these constitute the government's major priorities at this point in time when our people are fully engaged in the task of national reconstruction.