



**Address by**

**His Excellency Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo  
President of the Republic of  
GUYANA**

**to the**

**Sixty-Fourth Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to join preceding speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Assembly's highest office and in wishing you much success during your tenure.

To your predecessor, Mr. Miguel D'Escoto Brockman of Nicaragua, I offer my delegation's sincere appreciation and thanks for conducting our deliberations over the past year.

And to you, Mr. Secretary General, I extend our gratitude for continuing to spearhead the work of the United Nations Organisation at a time when our membership is beset by historic challenges.

Mr. President, the theme selected for this year's General Assembly debate focuses attention on the need for more effectiveness in responses to global crises. This emphasis could not be more appropriate, or timely. Recent history is replete with examples of global crises that have been faced, and apparently overcome, only to be repeated with greater severity. This sequence, which has repeated itself time after time, leads to an inevitable conclusion that the lessons of earlier crises were not heeded and that the responses were not sustainable.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the global economy, which has catapulted from one calamity to another in recent years, each more severe and pervasive than the previous. And, each of them has successively disclosed new vulnerabilities in the global financial architecture, and in the development model that has been advocated by the major capitals to the developing world through the orthodoxies of the international financial institutions.

### **Impact of Economic Crisis on Vulnerable Small States**

One common thread through every financial and economic crisis has been the devastating effects and lasting damage exacted on the smallest and most vulnerable economies of the world. The peculiar vulnerabilities of small states have long been identified. These include the minute size of their domestic markets, remoteness of location, susceptibility to natural disasters, few opportunities for diversification, constraints in institutional capacity, limited opportunities for economies of scale and scope, openness to and dependency on trade and investment, poor access to external capital, and persistent poverty. These factors have been well known for some time, but demonstrable progress towards resolving them remains elusive.

In the case of the prevailing crisis, the small vulnerable economies of the Caribbean have had to bear the brunt of global recession. This has manifested itself through both depressed prices for primary commodities exported such as bauxite, and depressed demand for services such as tourism. The result has been loss in export and foreign currency earnings with attendant dislocation to exchange rates, reduced government revenues exacerbating an already tenuous fiscal and debt situation, loss of jobs and welfare, and reversal of gains previously made against poverty.

Even as we seek long term solutions to bolster the resilience of our economies, the need for relief and support is immediate. The capacity of the small countries of the Caribbean to respond with countercyclical measures is virtually non-existent with no available fiscal space and levels of indebtedness that are among the highest in the world. The case is therefore compelling for the global community to relieve and restructure the debt of these heavily indebted vulnerable small countries, including those who were not previously considered for debt relief because of their income levels but whose debt ratios are clearly unsustainable by any standard.

The case is equally compelling for new additional flows of developing assistance to be delivered to these countries by both multilateral and bilateral development partners.

Despite injections of large amounts of additional resources into some of the multilateral institutions, and approval of new facilities by these institutions, very little has actually materialised in terms of additionality in disbursements to smaller states. This needs to be corrected urgently, if we are to avoid the perception that there is an absence of concern at the global level for the needs of smaller countries.

### **Concerns as they relate to Climate Change**

Mr. President, there has been much talk this week of the urgency of tackling climate change. Thanks to the vision exhibited by the Secretary General and the work of leaders and citizens from countries across the world, the level of understanding of the nature of the climate challenge is increasingly clear.

But Mr President, we need to move beyond simply understanding the challenge. We need to work as a global community to shape a solution that is in all our interests, and many of the building blocks that will enable us to do this have been identified. The challenge for the Copenhagen meeting of the UNFCCC is to turn these building blocks into an agreement that can start to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

In doing so, we should be guided by science and by the need for solutions that treat all countries fairly. But we also need to recognise that the challenge now is as much about political will as it is about scientific, economic or institutional considerations. In addressing the politics, we need to recognise that in all countries – developed and developing – there are concerns about the commitment of others to the long term global partnership we need. Many developing countries question whether the international community will commit to the scale of financial transfers that all major analyses agree are needed. Others are worried that acting on climate change now will stymie their national development, precisely at the time when many are poised for historical levels of economic growth and social advances. On the other hand, many developed countries are worried that the financial transfers needed will be an excessive burden on their budgets during extremely challenging economic times. Domestic constituencies in the developed world are also fearful about transferring significant sums of money abroad,

and worry that jobs or investment will be driven away from their own economies. There are also fears from individual countries that they will be expected to carry a greater burden than other developed nations.

These political concerns could be a recipe for a stalemate that the world cannot afford. Failure to overcome them now will mean misery for future generations, and the eventual costs of tackling climate change will be even greater than they are now. So we need to find a way through.

This will require leadership from all nations. I welcome the proposals laid out by the UK, and subsequently supported by the European Union, to generate funding of about USD\$100 billion per annum to address climate change in the developing world. For the first time, this is a proposal that starts to square up to the magnitude of funding that is required. What matters now is that we see it move from proposal to action, in a way that is fully additional to existing aid contributions from the developed world. We also need to learn from our experiences of the aid agenda – if we are to combat climate change, developing countries must not be seen as passive recipients of aid, but as equal partners in the search for climate solutions. If this happens, it can start to send the signal that the developed world is serious about solving the problem of climate change.

Having spoken with many of my fellow leaders this week, I am confident that with the right signal from the developed world, developing countries are ready to play their part. Of particular opportunity and urgency will be finding ways to work together to address the 17% of greenhouse gas emissions that result from tropical deforestation and forest degradation globally. As with climate change generally, we now have a large degree of clarity around the nature of this specific problem – we know that it causes more emissions than the entire European Union, and we know that this is because the world economy makes trees worth more dead than alive. We also know that the only sustainable way to address the problem is national-scale action in forest countries coupled with international incentives that place a value on trees to make them worth more alive than dead.

We now need to rapidly move from a constant re-articulation of this problem towards putting in place workable solutions.

In Guyana, we remain ready to play our part, and we have launched our Low Carbon Development Strategy, which sets out how we can place our entire forest under long-term protection to not only provide the world with badly needed climate services, but to also move our economy onto a long-term sustainable low carbon development path, where jobs are created across our country in sectors that do not threaten our trees. Thanks to the visionary leadership of the Prime Minister of Norway, our two countries are also working together to provide a functioning model of how low deforestation and low carbon economies can be created in countries such as ours.

In parallel, Guyana continues to play our part in the UNFCCC process, which must provide the long-term framework for combating forest-based emissions through the Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation mechanism, or REDD+. But we also believe that the world can quickly move to slow down deforestation starting now, not in 2013. Guyana was pleased to participate in the April G20 side meeting that addressed how this can happen. We support the proposals from the Informal Working Group on Interim Financing for REDD report which was set up after the G20 side meeting. And we support their report which lays out how the world can achieve a 25% reduction in global deforestation rates by 2015 with an investment of less than 25 billion euros in total. Using highly conservative estimates of forest carbon, this could lead to 7 Gt of greenhouse gas emissions being avoided between now and 2015. If this occurred, it would be the single biggest contribution to averting climate catastrophe over this period. And it can be done – rainforest countries representing the vast majority of the world's tropical forests worked with the informal working group, and are willing to act. The question now is will the developed world understand the enormous potential this offers our world, and will they act to generate the finances that are needed?

can only be helpful and Guyana therefore supports any acceptable initiative in this regard.

Unfortunately, it seems that because of distrust among the countries directly concerned, initial efforts have been none too successful. We must persist, however, since dialogue offers the best prospects for the peaceful reconciliation of conflicting positions. Therefore, having begun here at the United Nations, the dialogue must extend to include every nation, every region and every culture so that all humanity can better come to know and appreciate the virtues of diversity and tolerance.

### **The Case for Strengthened Multilateralism**

Mr. President, the global crises which now beset us require global solutions. This is the most important lesson to be learnt from the era of globalisation and interdependence. The bipolarity of the Cold War Era has yielded to increased multilateralism, in which there has been a diffusion of political and economic power. In many ways, some forms of global governance are no longer commensurate to the needs of the international community and must therefore be suitably altered.

The United Nations is now engaged in an endeavour to remedy the deficiencies of the present system by strengthening the foundations of multilateralism upon which the Organisation's Charter is based. For almost two decades now various organs, committees and working groups have laboured to develop proposals for reform.

Admittedly, for a body as large and as complex as ours, the task of finding "general consensus" is not easy. However, I believe the time has come to assess our progress or lack thereof and, on the basis of our findings, try to accelerate the completion of our task.

While acknowledging that the process has generated some tangential improvements in the operation of the international system, the main objectives which we as small states set for ourselves at the start, remain largely unfulfilled. The revitalisation of the General

Assembly, the most representative of the organs, must go beyond a few token changes to become truly the voice and conscience of mankind. The Security Council must be expanded and enhanced to make it more democratic, accountable and transparent in the performance of its mandate to preserve global peace and security. Access to and participation in the Council's deliberations must be guaranteed for small states.

Similarly, the Economic and Social Council must be endowed with the political weight necessary to implement the Organisation's Agenda for Development. The Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization, should be brought more under the United Nations umbrella to provide for the participation of small states in the decision making process and for greater cooperation in the discharge of their respective mandates. Very importantly, the principle and practice of special and differential treatment for small and disadvantaged states should be incorporated in the policies and programmes of these organisations.

Above all, however, Mr. President a profound attitudinal change will be required of all member states to strengthen multilateralism as the preferred mechanism for managing future international relations. Selfish interests and old divisions must be replaced by a new ethic of collaboration and a new sense of morality. Declarations of intent are no substitute for critical decision making. The very word "crisis" which comes from the Greek connotes the need for decision.

On a final note, therefore, I would urge this 64th General Assembly to avoid further delay and ensure that its deliberations contribute concretely to advancing the progress of the United Nations Organisation and the peoples it serves.