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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**GENERAL DEBATE  
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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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*(Check against delivery)*

**PERMANENT MISSION OF BELIZE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government and people of Belize, I congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly. It is a distinct honour for all Central American and Caribbean peoples. I assure you of Belize's fullest support during your term of office. I would also wish to thank your distinguished predecessor Srgjan Kerim for the sterling manner in which he presided over the 62<sup>nd</sup> session. Also too I wish to pay tribute to our very capable Secretary General who works so assiduously to discharge the multi-faceted responsibilities of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Belize accepts with pride and humility the invitation you so kindly extend to us to share our vision of how we should address the great challenges of the day and how we can achieve the unity we need in order to do so effectively.

Being a micro state in a world that has long been characterized by greed, indifference, arrogance, apathy, selfishness and myopia, Belize is no stranger to crises. In our evolution from colonialism to Independence, we have had far more than our fair share of them and we survived them all.

Thus, while we join in the consensus so forcefully articulated over the last week, that never has there been a time in the recorded history of mankind that the world has been beset at one and the same time by so many crises of potential catastrophic proportions as it is today, we remain convinced that the solution to these crises are not beyond the collective wisdom of mankind. On the contrary, we are convinced that our world leaders, who gathered within these hallowed walls this past week, possess within their grasp, the moral, intellectual and financial capacities to overcome the present challenges and to secure the future of our planet earth and of all who dwell upon it. We therefore look to the future with optimism.

Mr. President,

My government believes that there are a number of pre-conditions that must be satisfied before we can hope to successfully combat the present challenges we face. The first of these is the acceptance by all peoples that we are our brothers keeper and that, as you so poignantly stated, and here I quote; "Either we treat each other as brothers and sisters or we witness the beginning of the end of our human species" end of quote.

The second and equally important pre-condition is the acceptance by all peoples that we are heirs to and the owners of this earth and of all the resources thereon and that no individual race or nation has a greater claim to them than anyone else. And the third and perhaps the most important pre-condition of all is the acceptance by all peoples that our planet as we know it is not indestructible and that it can be mortally damaged if not destroyed by what we do to it and that none of us would escape the consequences of such a tragic turn of events.

Mr. President,

The experience of our own country Belize bears out the fact that the treatment we mete out to each other determines to a large extent our own destinies. The hardships and depredations which Belizeans suffered in the past and continue to suffer even today is caused in large part not because nature dealt us a bad hand but because of the human exploitation and selfishness of which we are the victims. Nature itself has been bountiful to us. So much so that our national

poet, Samuel Haynes, who penned the lyrics of our national anthem was moved to begin one of the stanzas with the following line, "Nature has blessed us with wealth untold".

Yet, Mr. President, with all our abundant natural resources, it is very doubtful whether we will, despite our best efforts, be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015. We are not in a position to say today with any degree of certainty that by the year 2015 all the children in our country, boys and girls alike, will complete publicly funded primary education. We can neither forecast that, by 2015, we will attain gender equality or that we will reduce child mortality by two thirds, maternal mortality by three quarters and that we will be able to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases.

The truth is that small countries like ours are not the masters of our own destinies. We are severely constrained in what we can do to advance our own development agendas because we simply do not possess and cannot readily access the resources, human, financial or technological needed to develop our people and to secure their futures. And, we will, given the predatory nature of the world we live in today, never be able to attain those resources using our own devices. We will most certainly need the assistance of the international community. We live in an interdependent world.

Mr. President,

While the developed countries may possess all the human, financial and technological resources we lack, the crises which now confront us are making it manifest that not even the richest and most powerful of them can successfully withstand and combat the catastrophic consequences of nature's fury and mans excesses by relying on their own devices and resources. They must join forces with the rest of the world. This imperative was articulated by Mr. Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on the 25<sup>th</sup> September in this very hall when he stated, in essence, that every global problem requires global solutions. And, that we cannot solve the food crises, climate change and the pressures on resources without involving Africa and developing countries, and that Africa and developing countries are not the problem but part of the very solution to today's problems.

Mr. President,

What Gordon Brown speaks to and what many of the leaders in this General Debate have highlighted is the global leadership challenge we face.

In addressing this challenge, we would propose that we must first examine how our multilateral institutions function.

Joseph Stiglitz in his book *Making Globalization Work* writes that:

The nation-state, which has been the center of political and . . . economic power for the past century and a half is being squeezed today – on one side, by the forces of global economics, and on the other side, by political demands for devolution for power. Globalization – the closer integration of the countries of the world – has resulted in the need for more collective action, for people and countries to act together to solve their common problems.

Stiglitz continues that "while the nation-state has been weakened, there has yet to be created at the international level the kinds of democratic global institutions that can deal effectively with the

problems globalization has created.” There is no disputing that the interests of the developing countries are poorly represented and dealt with in the present global institutions.

This is clearly manifested in the multilateral trade and financial institutions where negotiations are closeted in Green Rooms, and where the fundamental democratic principle of one vote per country is subverted in a system that determines voting rights based on economic power. If the developing countries are to become developed ones, it will be imperative to revisit these structures and transform them into institutions that are representative, transparent and democratic.

Mr. President,

In addition to the systemic issues that must be addressed, we must also tackle the crisis of implementation.

If we consider the numerous conferences and summits that have been convened to craft global responses to development, sustainable development, financing for development, trade, climate change, and more recently the food crisis, there is no want of commitments and common objectives.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) promised to the world’s peoples that we would take concerted action to improve the quality of their lives. The Monterrey Consensus promised a new global partnership that would support those efforts toward eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable economic growth and sustainable development. The Doha Ministerial declaration promised to put the needs and interests of the developing countries at the heart of its work programme.

But, we know from the reports that our progress toward the realization of the MDGs has been slow and uneven; and that the realization of the Monterrey commitments has been dismal particularly on the part of developed countries and the international financial and trade institutions; and that the Doha Development Round has collapsed. Indeed, were these commitments not set down on paper one might question their very existence.

We also know that the failure of the full implementation of our global commitments is not for want of resources but for want of compassion and empathy. Globalization may have forced the world into a closer relationship, but at the political level, it has not managed to calibrate national interests vis a vis global interests. We therefore still act only when it is in our narrow self-interest so to do.

However, the current crises are signaling clearly that we can no longer subsume the global interests for our own; the challenges we face clearly demonstrate how our fates are intertwined. As leaders we must start now with a sense of urgency to take the necessary action to deliver upon the promises of development. More importantly we must commit to submit our actions to international oversight.

Mr. President,

The United Nations must play the pivotal role in addressing the global leadership crisis.

Belize holds the view that the way forward is for the United Nations to concentrate its efforts on convincing the leaders and peoples of the developed world that the security, development and

wellbeing of all peoples of the world affords the best guarantee for their own safety, security and development and ultimately their very survival.

It is our conviction that the adoption of that view by the developed world would prove to be the catalyst for achieving the unity which the world now needs to be able to address successfully the challenges of our day.

To this end, the United Nations must be strengthened so as to better serve to monitor the implementation of the globally agreed commitments. Its universality must be reinforced with the participation of all relevant stakeholders in its elaboration of responses to our threats and challenges. In this regard, my Government wholeheartedly supports the participation of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the United Nations specialized agencies. Finally, its decisions must carry the full weight that impels action.

Mr. President,

The United Nations still represents the great hope for all our peoples. The principles upon which it was founded and the objectives for which it was formed, are no less relevant today than they were in 1945. For my own country, our membership to the United Nations secured for us the hope of peace, security and development even as we continue to struggle with a long extant claim to our territory. It provides the framework within which we can peacefully settle our differences. Today, the Governments of Belize and Guatemala have an opportunity to finally settle this dispute by juridical means, specifically through referral to the International Court of Justice. We have reached a major stepping stone but we are not deluded by the challenges ahead. Not only must we negotiate a *Compromis* for the referral of the matter but that the question of taking the claim to the ICJ must be put to national referenda in both countries. The road to the ICJ and the final resolution of the territorial differendum will undoubtedly have many high tolls. Belize appeals to the international community through the United Nations for its continued solidarity and support.

Mr. President,

Sixty years ago when we adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, humanity had been wrested from the throes of war. The Declaration confirmed that “[a]ll human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; [that] [t]hey are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” The global conscience was awakened and alert because our forebears knew that the continued disregard and contempt for human rights and freedoms would lead to barbarous acts between peoples and nations. They foresaw the advent of a world in which human beings would enjoy freedom of speech and beliefs and freedom from fear and want and proclaimed these as the highest aspirations of the common people.

My government holds an unflinching commitment to these values and aspirations. We are still soldiers in the battle for Freedom, Equality and Justice. But in fighting that battle we no longer need the crude instruments of war. We have instead as our weapon the power of the rule of law, cooperation and friendship between peoples and nations, and an abiding faith in multilateralism.

Let us be so guided.

Thank you.