

INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
Port Louis, Mauritius (10-14 January 2005)
HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

STATEMENT BY GRENADA

By

H.E. The Honourable Ann David-Antoine, Minister of Health, Social Security, the
Environment and Ecclesiastic Relations.

Thank you Mr. Chairman

Mr. Chairman, I speak and bring greetings on behalf of the Government and People of Grenada. I wish to join the many speakers before me and express our sincerest appreciation and gratitude to the Government and People of Mauritius for their warm and generous hospitality and for the excellent arrangements made for this meeting. To you Mr. Chairman I say thanks for your excellent leadership.

Mr. Chairman as I speak, the Government and People of Grenada, with assistance from the international community are virtually picking-up-the-pieces following the ravages of Hurricane Ivan.

Hurricane Ivan is one of the most destructive forces that have impacted the shores of the Caribbean. While all countries of the region have been negatively affected — Grenada, Bahamas, Jamaica, Haiti and the Cayman Islands were hardest hit. In fact, we can surely empathise and commiserate with our brothers and sisters in Asia who have also experienced unprecedented damage and loss of life, as a consequence of a natural phenomenon. Our hearts and prayers are with them as they too seek to pick up the pieces.

Mr. Chairman, these occurrences underscore the particular vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States and the need to build national and regional resilience. Within the time-frame of a few hours, Hurricane Ivan caused widespread devastation to the economic, social and environmental fabric of the Grenadian society.

Apart from the loss of many lives, the productive base of the economy was destroyed. 90% of the entire housing stock was destroyed or damaged. 92% of the forest area, watershed and mangroves was destroyed. 95% of the schools infrastructure and other built environment was destroyed. The critical tourism sector was virtually obliterated. Other sectors were not spared.

The statistics of the damage is staggering and the economic, social, environmental and psychological costs are alarming for us. I can go on and on, but suffice it to say that many of us in this room can emotionally recount recent experiences that are testimony to the importance of our deliberations here in Mauritius.

Prior to September 7th, 2004, Grenada had made significant progress towards the fulfillment of its obligations with respect to the Barbados Programme of Action and other

relevant instruments. With the support of sub-regional, regional and international partners, great progress was made, along all issues identified in the Barbados Programme of Action plus the emerging issues.

Hurricane Ivan had other plans for us, and has nullified our efforts and significantly reduced our capacity to address these issues. Grenada now needs access to resources for building capacity and resilience and for institutional strengthening coupled with access to investments and concessionary financing to assist in the reconstruction and development programme currently underway. This is necessary to return the economy to a path of sustainable growth and development.

Mr. Chairman, we welcome the Mauritius Declaration and the Strategy for the further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and express our thanks to the United Nations Secretariat, the Government of Mauritius and the international community for making this conference possible.

There are many critical issues to be decided upon, during our deliberations. Grenada joins other Small Island Developing States in general and our Caribbean neighbours in particular, with respect to the common positions on the various issues. We wish to underscore the particular references to **climate change, climate variability, sea level rise, disaster risk reduction and mitigation, globalization, trade, and HIV/AIDS**. We highlight the need to employ appropriate and relevant scientific and technological solutions aimed at reducing the vulnerabilities of SIDS.

Mr. Chairman, Grenada subscribes to the thinking that the vulnerability question **MUST** be central in any discussion and that specific, targeted and action-oriented provisions must be the order of the day for the future implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. While general provisions have great value in terms of philosophy and context, real actions supported by appropriate levels of resources **MUST** be undertaken for meaningful and sustained effect. Building capacity and building resilience among Small Island Developing States are critical to the way forward. In this regard, we **URGE** the international community to spare no effort to ensure that the necessary resources are made available to Small Island Developing States. The success of this meeting has much to do with the reality of resource flows and national capacities to address the clearly identified priorities of Small Island Developing States.

Finally Mr. Chairman, let me again on behalf of the Government and People of Grenada, thank the sub-regional, regional and international communities for their much needed support during our period of intense grief. As we now seek to *"build back better; as we seek to develop national capacity and resilience; and as we embark on reconstruction and national development*, we again make a special appeal for the kind consideration of the international community.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.