



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELIZE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**TO THE**

**FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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

Mr. President  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

My delegation congratulates you on the assumption of the Presidency. We have every confidence that the fifty ninth session of the General Assembly will enjoy success under your leadership.

We would also like to acknowledge the good work of your predecessor, Minister Julian Hunt of St. Lucia, whose efforts led to a new level of enthusiasm within the General Assembly.

As well we recognize the tireless efforts of our Secretary General.

Events of the past months impel us to ponder the importance of our Organisation in the never-ending struggle to secure a peaceful and dignified future for the world's people.

The United Nations was born to promote those values that would unite humanity – values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for peoples and for nature – and thus transcend the differences of the worlds' cultures. And so it is that nations large and small come to the United Nations to find, in the words of our Secretary-General, "common solutions to common problems." And so it is that we the Member States must ensure that the United Nations is effective for our ends.

In Belize we understand this and remain a legitimate partner in promoting principles such as peace, the right to self determination, social justice, respect for human dignity, the rule of law; the right to development and the protection of our environment.

We stand for these principles not just because of the international instruments we signed, but because they represent the best way to end poverty, illiteracy, hate and ignorance. To stop the spread of terrorism, bring an end to poverty, inequality, oppression, and injustice.

For the overwhelming majority in the United Nations, the solution to many of the world's problems can be found in the right of every nation to achieve meaningful sustainable development. Accomplishing such a goal is not easy; but neither is it impossible.

Yes, challenges to development abound – challenges that make us inherently vulnerable - and we as small states call on the international community to take into account our vulnerability so as to ensure that policies and measures relating to development correspond to our special needs.

As a member of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS), my country underscores the importance of addressing the special needs of these states through the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The International Meeting, which will conduct full and comprehensive review of the Barbados Programme of Action to be held in Mauritius next January (2005) will provide an opportunity for the international community, especially the bilateral and multilateral donors, to renew their commitments to the Programme of Action. Of special importance to us all is the issue of climate change, and we must not flinch from taking effective measures to address this problem; those who seek to block effective solutions are creating conditions for insecurity that would dwarf the threats currently posed by terrorism.

In this context, we remind member States of the proposal first submitted to the General Assembly in 1999 to designate the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area within the context of sustainable development. The recent spate of hurricanes that have devastated our region, and which call for major efforts from the international community to mitigate our losses, reinforce our contention that our Caribbean Sea is as fragile as it is valuable to our social and economic well-being, indeed to our very survival. We call upon you to support us in our just efforts to achieve the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area during this General Assembly.

In addition to addressing the special needs of developing countries, development policies must above all be people centred. Coherent policies, sustainable partnerships, sustained support and ownership are critical factors to development.

This has never been as clear as in the case of Haiti. In the words of our Secretary-General: "the international community failed to develop sustainable partnerships with the Haitian society at all levels. The Haitian people were insufficiently involved in the development of policies that could move the country forward . . . Financial aid did not bear fruit to the extent expected because it was at times ill-targeted." With the lesson thus learnt, we have an opportunity to influence a positive wave of development for the people of Haiti.

In Haiti, we also have a clear example of the inextricable linkage between development and security. The threats and challenges to peace and security necessitate an integrated approach. My country hopes that the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will embrace this approach in its findings and recommendations.

While we condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and have joined international efforts in the fight against terrorism, we are mindful that our actions for the preservation of peace and security must be consistent with international law and must be respectful of the human rights and freedoms of all peoples without discrimination, foremost among which must be the right to self-determination. It is for this reason that we shall remain strong proponents of the right of the Palestinian people to a secure and viable State. It is also for this reason that we support the Taiwanese people's right of representation before the United Nations.

But what United Nations? Last year our Minister of Foreign Affairs confined his remarks to an urgent call for the United Nations to recall and enforce the principles on which it was founded, basic among which is the principle of multilateralism, the most fundamental conviction that led to its creation: that States, on a basis of sovereign equality, conjointly take decisions that secure a peaceful and prosperous world for all. Tragically, events since then have only exacerbated the problem of powerful States taking the law into their own hands and acting in total disregard of the principles of the UN Charter and indeed of international law. If we do not act together to reverse this evil trend, we are walking – nay, running - on the road to perdition.

Yes, we support the call of India, Japan, Brazil and Germany for a permanent seat on the Security Council, if there must be permanent seats, and to this we would add the equally legitimate right of African and Arab nations to be so represented. But the reforms must go deeper. Why should any one country have a veto power? Why should millions of the wretched of the earth be left without an effective voice and powerless to change the world to a more just one?

And why do we, who so effectively acted to end apartheid in South Africa, tolerate the equally opprobrious apartheid practiced by the State of Israel against Palestinians in their own land, murdering and oppressing them without mercy and with impunity?

This year has been declared the International Year for the Commemoration of the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition; slavery was based on, and exacerbated, racism; let us honour that struggle by implementing the final declaration of the

World Conference against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in South Africa in 2001.

Likewise we continue to support UN efforts to bring greater visibility to the problems of the world's indigenous people during the decade on Indigenous Issues. As the International Decade draws to a close later this year we call for a second decade to continue the work achieved during the first decade and to carry out and complete the work that has not yet been completed.

In our own community of small states, we face the most serious threat to our peoples' security caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons that claim the lives of so many of our people daily; arms that come from countries that must be called upon to live up to their responsibility to cooperate with us to stem the flow of these lethal weapons and enter into legally binding agreements for the effective registration and monitoring of transfers of these weapons of widespread destruction. An International Convention to achieve this must be put on our urgent agenda.

Another major issue for our region is the continued attempt to isolate the sister Caribbean republic of Cuba, and to strengthen an economic embargo that has been condemned repeatedly by the overwhelming majority of this Assembly. The entire Caribbean Community is at one in its resolve to engage Cuba in a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership that brings concrete benefits to all our peoples. The Cuban government has by its actions manifested its determination to fight against terrorism in all its forms and from every quarter; for us in the Caribbean any call for "regime change" imposed from outside violates every principle upon which the United Nations Organisation stands.

Belize has its own cause to promote. The United Nations is well aware of the age-old and unfounded territorial claim of Guatemala, and has clearly and unanimously called for respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize. We have endeavoured to negotiate a just solution to this claim for decades, and in the last four years have been engaged in a process under the auspices of the Organisation of American States aimed at bringing this anachronistic claim to an end; agreements have been made and broken, in the context of a Guatemala that has proclaimed its desire to find a peaceful solution to the dispute; still no solution is in sight. The worst scenario is for the claim to linger unresolved, affecting the security and development of our people.

We welcome the remarks of President Berger of Guatemala before this Assembly on 22 September, where he advocates a final settlement of the dispute along with cooperation between our two countries to improve the socio-economic conditions of

both our peoples; we certainly support this approach and will do our part, as we have always done, to achieve these noble goals. But cooperation does not substitute for resolution of this age-old threat to the security and prosperity of our people.

We will therefore continue to work within the OAS to develop an agreed process that will bring finality to this matter, which will undoubtedly redound to the benefit of the peoples of both Belize and Guatemala and contribute to the peace and security of the region.

The challenges we face in the world today are not all unique to our generation; some are the result of our refusal to learn from the mistakes of the past, others are entirely of our making. Yet if we are to look at those values that unite us and be determined in our desire for good, we will find that working together brings us ever closer to a more just and peaceful world.

Thank you.