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GRENADA'S STATEMENT

BY

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To the United Nations**

***TO THE 59TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY***

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
My delegation joins in the many laudatory and congratulatory expressions addressed to Dr. Jean Ping as he assumes the presidency of the 59th Session of the UNGA.

Additionally, we pay tribute to your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Julian Hunte, whose presidency of the 58th Session was virile, dynamic and constructive, imbued, as he was, with the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job and the vision of Daniel.

Mr. President,
Grenada's statement is made from the profound depths of the human heart. The Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Hon. Elvin Nimrod, whose unavoidable absence can be understood, have asked me to speak on their behalf.

Mr. President, Ladies, Gentlemen,
You will, I hope, understand why Grenada's statement in this general debate will focus in large measure on the natural disaster that has befallen the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

First, Grenada expresses grateful appreciation for the outpouring of sympathy and assistance from the many countries that have already taken the rostrum, especially the Caribbean leaders who have seen and described to you, in chilling and heart-rending detail, the devastation of the tri-island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, caused by hurricane Ivan "the Terrible."

Therefore, Mr. President, there is no need for me to multiply words, except to say that the fickle finger of fate seemed to have conspired with Nature, exceedingly benevolent but sometimes equally destructive. This time it has released its full fury on a vulnerable Small Island Developing State reducing it to rubble. After hurricane Ivan's rage had subsided, there was complete destruction of the infrastructure. It seemed as if a Stygian darkness had descended on the land.

However, the resilience of our people and the emerging solidarity give hope that with the assistance of the international community, Grenada, like the mythological phoenix, will rise from the ashes brought about by the hurricane.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Who can help us pick up the pieces of a shattered country with a dislocated economy, the precipitous decline of which has reached rock bottom? An assessment of the destruction reveals that it would take \$2 billion to rebuild the State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. This is an Herculean task, several times beyond our means. The call, therefore, made to the international country, is "Come down to Macedonia and help us." We plead with the United Nations and its agencies—UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, IMF, FAO, WHO, individual countries, individual Permanent Representatives, NGO's and friends to help Grenada help itself.

In this connection, Mr. President, my delegation recalls the words of the 17th century English clergyman and poet, John Donne, "No man is an island entirely of itself. Each one is a piece of the maine, so that what happens to each of us affects all of us." Today this is eminently borne out by the interconnectivity and interdependence of societies, aided by the information and communication technology revolution. Consequently, we now speak about a world shared by all instead of a world divided by all. Giving, caring and sharing should, therefore, be a reality and not just a concept.

Mr. President, debt forgiveness and obligations to international organizations and institutions, if cancelled will give Grenada a breathing spell. Help, in this regard, will be requested formally through official channels and will free Grenada of its many obligations.

Mr. President,

The dire problems of my country notwithstanding, we cannot fail to touch upon the world situation in which the geopolitical centre of gravity continues to swing from Israeli/Palestinian struggle to Iraq and to Afghanistan. The situation in these centers of conflict is further fanned by the heinous and atrocious crime of terrorism, which is fast becoming a way of life.

In this regard, my delegation recalls an ancient law viz. hatreds never cease by hatreds, it is by love alone that they cease.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will recall that from this rostrum I told my colleagues that I would demit office at the end of this month, having attained the ripe old age of 84 years and after serving my country in this honourable body for almost 13 years.

Today, I want to recant that diplomatic note of my premature departure and to tell you that my government has asked me to continue. Therefore, refreshed in body and mind, confident in faith and joyful in hope, I will continue to expect your generous assistance.

With respect to my age, Sir Francis Bacon wrote several centuries ago that age is best in four ways—old wood the best to burn; old wine the best to drink; old books the best to read and old friends the best to keep. I treasure your friendship and ask for your support on behalf of my country.

Let me conclude with this patriotic verse—To all the world I give my hand/My heart I give my native land/I seek her good, her glory/I honour every nation's name/Respect their fortune and their fame/But I love the land that bore me! Love the land that bore me!

Thank you.