



SAINT LUCIA

STATEMENT BY

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CIVIL AVIATION

OF SAINT LUCIA

TO THE 61ST SESSION

OF THE UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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(Check against delivery)

Madame President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, permit me to congratulate you on your election as President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly, and to express our appreciation to your predecessor Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden for the excellent manner in which he spearheaded the work of the 60th Session.

We wish also to express our profound respect and gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his great vision, committed leadership and tireless efforts in promoting the noble ideals and values of the United Nations under the most difficult circumstances. We wish him and his family well in their future endeavours.

Madame President,

When, in September 2000, member government, of the United Nations took the unprecedented step of pledging to meet eight "Millennium Development Goals" (MDGS) by the year 2015, it represented a belated admission that the development of every nation is a collective responsibility. At the Millennium Summit, we recognized that it was an affront to our basic humanity that so many people on our planet continued to live in conditions of abject poverty and deprivation; that so many continued to suffer the ravages of disease and war; and that basic necessities of life taken for granted by ourselves – clean potable water, health care and good nutrition, a clean and safe physical environment, and peace and security – remained unattainable by so many. We also recognized that, unless we developed appropriate partnerships to deal with these problems, they would continue to persist, to our collective shame.

At this our 61st Session we seek to re-affirm our commitment to this notion of partnership as a significant modality for the attainment of our common goals. Saint Lucia is satisfied that the idea of partnership clearly accommodates the spirit of multilateralism which is the defining principle of our relationship within the United Nations.

This multilateralist spirit must constantly be safeguarded and fortified and this can only be accomplished by a strong and confident UN. Saint Lucia takes this opportunity to once again express its determined support for the programme of reform of the UN, designed as these are to create the capacity and conditions for the exercise of a strong central role by the UN within the international community. We salute the achievements to date, viz, the replacement of the moribund Human Rights Commission with the new Human Rights Council and the establishment of the Peace-building Commission. We recognize that these bodies are far from perfect and will require continued attention by Member States, however, they reflect our determination to translate talk into action.

Saint Lucia looks forward to continuing the discussions on the remaining items on our reform agenda, in particular Security Council reform, strengthening and refocusing of the General Assembly, the empowerment of ECOSOC and management reform.

Madame President,

Saint Lucia continues to believe in the wisdom of the words of our distinguished Secretary General, who in his March 2005 report, *In Larger Freedom*, opined *"We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed."* As we seek to develop partnerships for development, utilising the MDGs as the benchmark for that development, Saint Lucia has been moving steadily towards the attainment of some of these goals.

Universal primary education has been largely attained and we have gone further to introduce a programme of universal access to free secondary education for our young citizens.

In the area of health, Saint Lucia is in the process of establishing a universal Programme of free health care, and has made significant progress in the area of maternal and child health. We are also working steadfastly in the battle against HIV/AIDS through education, early detection and treatment programmes, and the provision of free or subsidized anti-retroviral drugs.

All of these efforts have been bolstered, in a practical demonstration of South-South cooperation, through generous support and assistance from a number of developing countries in the areas of human resource development in the health sector and the construction of new health facilities which will greatly enhance our ability to provide comprehensive health care services to all of our people. South-South partnerships are workable; we need to continue to develop and widen these for the betterment of developing countries.

Madame President,

Saint Lucia applauds the return of Haiti to democratic governance. This long-awaited development has led to the re-admission of that country to the Councils of the Caribbean Community. We recognize that the road to normalcy in Haiti will be a long and tortuous one requiring a sustained political focus by the international community.

Saint Lucia calls for the speedy release of development resources promised to that country in order that its government and people may tackle in a meaningful way, the numerous obstacles standing in the way of its development.

Madame President,

Saint Lucia welcomes the final document emanating from the 14th Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non Aligned Movement in Havana earlier this month.

This historic Meeting addressed a wide range of regional and international issues including the sanctity of international law, the promotion and preservation of multilateralism, peaceful settlement of disputes, the right to self-determination, and decolonisation.

The summit offered concrete and innovative proposals on the reform of the United Nations, including the modernisation of the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council.

The final document of the NAM Summit provides the international community with a workable roadmap for the development agenda far into this new century, with achievable solutions to many of the issues facing humankind today.

Madame President,

Saint Lucia also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development 2005*, and in so doing we call upon the developed countries represented at that forum to honour the commitments made at this and previous UN Summits and Conferences on trade, debt and finance, especially their promise to fulfill the goal of 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product to Official Development Assistance. We believe it is imperative that the international community increase its efforts at addressing the indebtedness of poor developing countries; promote foreign direct investment flows to a greater number of developing countries and address the systemic deficiencies in the global economic and financial system. These deficiencies Madame President all constitute serious threats to the survival of developing countries, especially those within the Caribbean area.

Madame President,

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as those in the Caribbean, the Pacific and Indian oceans, and in the Mediterranean, are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Whilst those of us residing in the tropics, in small islands and low-lying coastal areas are endangered daily through the impact of sea level rise, others are faced with unprecedented and accelerated thawing of ice caps, and the consequent loss of land mass.

We have already reached a dangerous level of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, and urgent action is required to reverse this situation.

In this connection, the international community, and in particular our developed partners need to take more aggressive action to promote the development and distribution of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies in developed and developing countries alike. To assist developing countries in playing its part in this connection, there is need for the establishment of a global renewable energy and energy efficiency fund.

St. Lucia joins with our colleague members of the Alliance of Small Island States, and other affected states, in calling for the international community to address the issues of sea level rise and climate change as a matter of urgency.

Madame President,

The international community must honour its responsibility and commitment to the full implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. We insist on the urgent and proper mainstreaming of the Strategy into the respective work programmes of the United Nations agencies and other bodies. Those who are the largest producers of greenhouse gases must bear the responsibility for the damage they are causing to the global environment, and in particular to the vulnerable countries whose sustainability – and very existence – is increasingly endangered by these un-sustainable practices.

From our own regional perspective, St. Lucia welcomes the adoption of measures for the promotion of an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development. We welcome initiatives taken to this end by the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and institutions and bodies of the United Nations.

Madame President,

Half a decade into the 21st Century, there still some 16 Non -Self-Governing Territories under the review of the General Assembly. Most of these are small island territories in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. Their decolonisation through a genuine process of self-determination is the unfinished agenda of the United Nations. In this connection, Article 73 (b) of the United Nations Charter on the necessity of promoting genuine self-government should be respected. We call on the administering Powers to increase the level of cooperation with the Special Committee on Decolonisation, and call on the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to assist the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the development of their capacity for self government, and in furtherance of their process of self-determination.

Madame President,

The year 2007 will mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade which began the process of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. A number of international events are being planned throughout the globe to honour the memory of the millions who died during the Middle Passage, and those who subsequently perished under the horrors of chattel slavery in the Caribbean and the Americas. This scourge was recognised by the international community as a crime against humanity in the outcome document of the *2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*.

St. Lucia joins with the countries of the African Diaspora in the Caribbean, and with other like-minded countries, in supporting a United Nations commemoration in 2007 of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Madame President,

St. Lucia and other neighboring countries have been seriously impacted by rulings of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) adversely affecting the access of our banana exports to preferential markets. Few in the developed world can appreciate the mass social dislocation which this decision has caused, with thousands of independent farmers, employers in their own right, left without a livelihood, through no fault of their own. Consider that for every banana farmer in Saint Lucia who has lost his/her livelihood, at least four to five persons have also been excised from direct participation in the economic system. The WTO has become synonymous with pain and suffering for farmers and other related economic agents in countries like St. Lucia. In many instances, the implementation of WTO obligations has created more hardship and poverty than previously existed.

Accordingly, whilst economic and trade policy reform, in principle, hold much promise for small developing countries, the international community must come to grips with the fact that the "one size fits all" approach is inappropriate and impractical. In this connection, a set of trading rules flexible enough to take into account the concerns of small states must be enacted. The principle of "**special and differential treatment**" must infuse all aspects of the new trade rules which we are seeking to create.

Madame President,

There is much unfinished business ahead of us. It is our expectation that the members of this august body will focus even more intently on the development of appropriate strategies for their resolution. We are confident that under your esteemed guidance and leadership the development agenda of this organization will be advanced further.

For our part, Saint Lucia remains committed to the ideals of multilateralism and reaffirms its view that this multilateral body, the United Nations, offers the best opportunity for the achievement of peace, security and sustainable development for all.

I thank you.