



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY

THE HONOURABLE SATO KILMAN  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

AT THE

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Madam President**  
**Mr. Secretary General**  
**Excellencies**  
**Distinguished Delegates**

Today, we stand on the verge of global uncertainty. The international landscape is scarred by wars, conflict, civil unrest, epidemics, drought and famine. Poverty and malnutrition continue to ravage the lives of millions of the world's inhabitants.

The very values and fabric on which the United Nations Organization was founded are being besieged by new ideas and principles that are undermining the authority of this august body in maintaining global peace and security. The clash of ideologies, cultural and religious differences continue to require much cogitation. The United Nations stands at the cross-roads. While the United Nations has the mandate to address these challenges, it remains paralyzed by actions of the hegemonic powers of today. This is the dilemma confronting the Organization.

The value of the human person and his or her right to live in a world that is fair and just seems but a dream. The dignity of one's right to live with access to the most basic necessities in life remains our greatest challenge. We speak so ambitiously of creating a world that is equitable and just however outcomes have been unimpressive.

The schism between the minority rich and the majority poor continues to grow. The multitudes of the disadvantaged are being further marginalized from the so called benefits of globalization. Fear has struck many small countries of the developing world- a fear not because the developing world has no capabilities in contributing to peace and security, but the fear, the greatest fear in fact, that the undemocratic practices of the major United Nations organs such as the Security Council is causing tension and disarray in the work of the United Nations.

The disparities in the quality of life between the "have and the have nots", have grown to be fertile breeding grounds for new and hostile generations. And it is here that the terrorism phenomenon continues to challenge the frontiers of our imagination. It is perhaps much clearer today than ever before that there are reasons for increased resentment in certain parts of the world.

My Government condemns terrorism in whatever form or manifestation it holds and there is an urgent need for all the members of the United Nations to work together openly in combating these dangerous developments. The destruction of innocent lives should not be the means to meeting an end. This is inhumane. All United Nations member countries therefore have this responsibility, a moral and ethical responsibility, in eradicating this menace from the face of the earth.

Peace cannot be won through injustice, double standard practices, aggression and war. We cannot be victorious in this fight against terrorism if we fail to address its root causes. Conversely, it is incumbent on all member states to act responsibly to ensure the attainment of all United Nations resolutions. Moreover, if we are to have any hope of building a better future then peace must sometimes come at a price.

We must begin to look deeply, honestly and with open hearts to really understand the world around us. If this is a question of repressive policies that influence and dominate the international economic and political order then those concerned must take remedial action. The adoption of the resolution on the United Nation's global Counter-Terrorism strategy is therefore a positive step forward.

The central focus on the fight against terrorism has taken centre stage for some and the diversion of resources is jeopardizing the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and ODA target

levels. Accessibility to markets in the affluent nations has also restricted the progress of development in many countries of the developing world. Major world players must not lose sight of these goals.

**Madam President,**

Interstate relations, mutual understanding and tolerance begin with respect for the individual. The dignity of the human person is the essence in building equality between all persons. This is one of the fundamental principles of the United Nations.

As members of the United Nations we all agreed to embrace these principles and we continue to believe in these values. Vanuatu joined the United Nations in 1981 because it believed in the Organization. Today, I stand before you to again reaffirm faith in the United Nations but I agree that changes must take place to adapt the United Nations system to the evolution in the international and geo-political and economic framework.

Reforms of the various United Nations bodies therefore become absolutely essential. There must be reforms of the Security Council to ensure it is democratic and more representative of the United Nations membership. The veto power in the Council dilutes all the good intentions the majority of the United Nations membership has towards addressing many of challenges confronting us today. The underlying question though is has the disproportionate use of the veto power sustained reasonable levels of international peace and stability?

Cultural and religious differences cannot be seen to be obstacles in this regard. The United Nations brought civility and etiquette in the conduct of relations between states, and central to this is relations between individuals. The art of statesmanship therefore becomes very critical at this time.

Respect, therefore, must begin here at the United Nations. When one world power speaks here this hall is jammed. Thereafter, it becomes routine. This is remiss of many of us. The annual General Assembly debate is the only practical occasion where almost all Leaders are together in one place to discuss and share views on the development challenges facing the globe. The United Nations is not about one or several nations- it is about this family of nations with one common objective to maintain international peace and security.

Over the last few days millions around the globe monitored the unfolding debate in this noble hall of the General Assembly. War of words resounded from this podium exposing an alarming rift in relations between some super powers and the voices of the developing world. Media have grasped the situation to scrutinize those events often ending up with gross assumptions and conclusions that have only instilled fear amongst the world's innocent population. Now, is this the right message of hope we are giving to our peoples who have faith in the United Nations? Isn't the United Nations the beacon of hope for all humanity?

Confrontations must be resolved through tactful diplomacy and negotiation consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and established international law. In this spirit we are also appealing to those concerned to exercise great restraint and to have the wisdom and responsibility that any action they take must foremost serve its purpose, which must be in the interest of future global justice, peace and security. Any retreat from multilateralism will only result in increased tension and aggression. Again, mutual dialogue through appropriate mechanisms is absolutely critical at this very delicate time.

On the question of the Middle East both Israel and Palestine have the right to live in peaceful co-existence side by side as independent and sovereign states. The international community must be realistic about the future. Let us allow justice, security and long lasting peace to prevail for both the Israeli people and the Palestinians.

**Madam President,**

Recently, Vanuatu was recognized by the "happy planet index" published by the British based New Economics Foundation as the happiest place on earth. We have been proud to have been placed so highly amongst all countries of the world. But we have been careful not to be carried away and so often it is this island paradox that conceals the diverse development challenges small island countries of the Pacific, like Vanuatu, face in today's world of globalization.

Last week during the High Level Meeting of Least Developed Countries on the Mid-term Review of the Brussels Program of Action I spoke of the many challenges facing my country in the implementation of the BPOA.

Vanuatu has been showing positive signs of gradual economic growth, however when considering both natural disasters and the exogenous market demand and supply price fluctuation vulnerabilities, and their adverse impacts on the three most important GDP contributing sectors, we consider the timing inappropriate to include Vanuatu in the list of countries eligible for graduation.

Furthermore, while the current methods used to measure the three main thresholds for graduation are dependant on statistical variables, it is perhaps commonly understood that statistical data in the Pacific, including Vanuatu, contain major discrepancies. Therefore, relying solely on this data to determine Vanuatu's achievements in relation to the thresholds would yield inaccurate results.

The General Assembly will be considering very soon countries recommended for inclusion in the list of countries eligible for graduation, and this list includes Vanuatu. Our arguments for exclusion from the list are well founded and based on practical realities. My Government considers the recommendation by the Committee for Development Policy for including Vanuatu in the above list premature. We therefore call upon members of the United Nations to understand and support Vanuatu's case.

As a responsible member of the United Nations, Vanuatu is also contributing towards international peace and security. Vanuatu peacekeepers have participated in United Nations peace-keeping missions in Bosnia, and East Timor, and currently we have peace-keepers stationed in Congo, Haiti, Ivory Coast and Sudan. Vanuatu has also participated in regional peacekeeping missions in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands. These efforts illustrate Vanuatu's resolve in peace-keeping and peace-building in both a regional and international context.

On the question of the environment, and in particular global warming and climate change, my Government strongly aligns itself with other small island states in urging the international community to reduce emissions. The failure of major emitters to sign up to the Kyoto Protocol is a major disappointment.

**Madam President,**

The Charter of the United Nations espouses the principles that continue to guide the Organization's efforts in the process of self-determination. This manifestation calls for recognition and respect of the fundamental rights of peoples and territories still under colonial rule. We must not lose sight of this goal.

The United Nations must pick up where it has failed to allow justice prevail for those peoples who continue to be denied their inalienable right to freedom and democracy. We must put to the past this dark history.

How to bring more cohesiveness and unity to this great community of nations has now become a much more formidable challenge. I affirm my support for the challenging exercise before us. Our Almighty Creator entrusted on us the human race to be guardians of this great asset, the earth, and it is incumbent on us to make the most of this opportunity. The world's destiny is in our hands. In this spirit I extend my congratulations to Montenegro for its admission as the 192<sup>nd</sup> member of the United Nations.

Before closing, I would like to acknowledge the support of our development partners, in particular Australia, New Zealand, France, Japan, the People's Republic of China, the United States of America and the European Union as well as the various United Nations bodies, who are strongly supporting the development of Vanuatu. I also extend our appreciation to India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia for their continuous support under the framework of South-South cooperation. My Government is also encouraged by the initiative and kind gesture of Venezuela to commit US\$ 2,000,000 to the Pacific Islands through the work program of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. These are positive developments that are overall complementing the leadership role my Government is taking in its development path.

In closing, Madam President, I take this final opportunity to pay our accolades to Kofi Annan, the esteemed Secretary General, for his outstanding stewardship of the United Nations. His wisdom has ensured the United Nations continues to retain its credibility and relevance. During periods of turbulence and uncertainty he has been relentless in the pursuit of his beliefs in reforming the United Nations. My Government salutes you for the distinguished service you have rendered to the United Nations and we wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Thank you.