



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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**TO THE
62ND SESSION OF THE
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Please check against delivery

Mr. President,

It is my great pleasure to extend to you warmest and most sincere congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Jamaican Delegation is confident that much will be accomplished during this 62nd United Nations General Assembly under your able leadership. You can be assured of the support of the Jamaican delegation in this endeavour.

To your predecessor, Her Excellency Sheika Haya Rashed Al Khalifa, the Jamaican Delegation extends its appreciation for her unstinting efforts in advancing the work of the General Assembly during the 61st Session.

Jamaica also wishes to pay tribute to the laudable efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon who, since his assumption to office in January of this year, has moved forward in earnest to enhance the process of reform of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

I am deeply honoured to be addressing the 62nd Session of the General Assembly on behalf of my country, Jamaica.

Today, I especially restate my country's firm commitment to the ideals and principles of the United Nations and to underscore Jamaica's strong support for multilateralism which must underpin the core processes in the execution of the functions and responsibilities of the United Nations. In doing so, I am driven by our resolve for change, as well as by the need for unity and for the reinvigoration of the United Nations in order for it to effectively and efficiently achieve the fundamental purposes set out in its Charter.

As we begin this Session, we must not lose sight of our strategic objectives and vision towards:

- the maintenance of international peace and security;
- the development of friendly relations among nations;
- the achievement of international cooperation in economic, social, cultural and humanitarian fields; and
- the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Current Global Situation

Mr. President,

Looking back at the record over the past year, it is disconcerting that the challenges we face at the global level have not seen much discernable change.

From a security point of view, the world continues to be plagued by seemingly incessant and protracted conflicts, such as those in the Middle East, parts of Africa and elsewhere. Millions of innocent persons are the victims of civil strife or are displaced as a result of violence and armed conflict.

Terrorism, transnational organized crime and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to threaten international peace and security.

From the economic and social perspective, we cannot escape the fact that we live in a world characterized by high levels of underdevelopment and social degradation, a world where too many people live in dehumanizing poverty.

It is a world in which human security is being threatened by environmental degradation. The experience of HIV/AIDS and the constant threat of new pandemics underscore our interconnectedness and interdependence, demanding universal cooperation and collective action.

Mr. President,

All states, developed and developing, large and small, are vulnerable to these threats and must of necessity have a shared commitment to strengthen collective security and safeguard world peace and security. No nation can address these challenges and threats entirely on its own. Sustained collective action and global cooperation is required to identify and shape a common vision and agreed objectives to deal with the complexities of our times.

In recent years, we have renewed our commitment to the United Nations as the catalyst for effectively advancing the interests of our peoples in the areas of development, peace and security and human rights.

Development

Mr. President,

Unquestionably, there have been pockets of success in global economic progress over the last decade. By and large, however, our commitments have not been matched by the desired implementation of the targets for meeting basic human needs, human security and sustainable development. It is clear that much more needs to be done if we are to achieve the development targets in the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Government of Jamaica fully accepts that each country has the primary responsibility for setting development priorities through sound governance and policies. We believe the goals that were solemnly agreed seven years ago are not overly ambitious and are still achievable. In this context, my government is committed to taking further measures to pursue the objectives of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. We are committed to providing the necessary framework that will promote social inclusion, enhance productive capacity and employment, and facilitate investment and sustained economic growth.

But, for many developing countries such as Jamaica, we cannot do it alone. The realization of the development agenda is dependent not only on our own domestic capabilities but equally on the genuine commitment of all Member States to pursue a global partnership for development which is at the core of the strategy for development.

We believe, therefore, that it is imperative that we move beyond the simple reiteration of principles and translate commitments into action. We must give life to the aspirations embodied in the outcomes of international conferences on the basis of mutual responsibility and mutual accountability with a fair expectation that obligations, as agreed, will be fully undertaken.

In all that we do we must recognize that progress and upliftment of the poor benefits all of us. It can mean the difference between conflict and stability; between hope and despair. As developing countries strive to put in place practical national development strategies, developed country partners must support these efforts through greater market access, debt relief, private capital flows, technological transfers, and improved global economic governance.

Jamaica, therefore, calls for renewed focus, as well as the necessary political will, to honour the commitments made for development and urges the fulfillment of all obligations that we have collectively embraced in order for us to effect real change in the lives of the millions of impoverished people around the world.

A critical role in this process is official development assistance, including the fulfillment by developed countries of the Official Development Assistance target of 0.7% of Gross National Income. The High-Level Meeting on Financing for Development provides an opportunity to enhance collaboration with our partners towards achieving this goal.

The unique situation of middle income developing countries such as Jamaica, also requires special attention. This varied group of countries, with per capita GDP spreading from US\$900 to US\$10,000, is by no means a homogenous group and possesses its own particular vulnerabilities. Greater efforts must be made to address the needs of middle-income developing countries, in particular the high level of indebtedness which these countries face.

Doha Development Agenda

Mr. President,

Globalization and economic liberalization have resulted in increased exposure of developing countries to external economic forces over which they have little control. We should refuse to accept that globalization creates winners and losers. What we should strive for is a win-win and inclusive process in which the benefits and opportunities are more widely enjoyed across countries and regions.

An enabling international environment also requires a global trading system that is fair and equitable and that is conducive to development and integration in the world economy. A continued cause of grave concern for Jamaica is therefore the current impasse in the negotiations in the

Doha Development Round in spite of commitments to work expeditiously towards implementing the development dimensions of the Doha work programme.

We must summon the necessary political will to reignite trade negotiations with the development agenda as the centerpiece of the discussions as we seek to integrate developing countries in the multilateral trading system.

It is important that the creation of a viable and equitable trade regime also recognizes diversity in the levels of development and size of economies. A one-size-fits-all model disregards the complexities and the unique circumstances of countries. Jamaica will therefore continue to insist that new trading arrangements take account of this differentiation, especially as it concerns small vulnerable economies. The principle of special and differential treatment seeks only to level the playing field and give developing countries a fair chance to participate meaningfully in global trade. At the same time, we will also join other developing countries in pressing for the removal of support of agricultural products by certain developed countries as a precondition for further market access for such products.

HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases

Mr. President,

We call for and join in continuous and concerted international efforts to fight the spread of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and others, particularly bearing in mind that they are all preventable. The global impact of AIDS has been particularly devastating. The high prevalence in many countries especially in Sub Saharan Africa and the Caribbean is cause for alarm.

Whilst noting the international response through UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS and Tuberculosis, we stress the need for increased funding to help support developing countries to fight the pandemic. We are particularly concerned that countries of the Caribbean, including Jamaica, are placed at a disadvantage in accessing necessary funding to curtail the spread of the disease owing to their assessed middle income status.

Sustainable Development

Mr. President,

Implementing a global response to climate change must remain a priority as we seek consensus for combating global warming beyond 2012 when the Kyoto Protocol expires. As we prepare for the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali, Indonesia, we are encouraged that the recent High Level Event on climate change and the General Assembly Informal Debate on Climate Change reinforced the urgency with which issues pertaining to environmental sustainability have to be tackled.

The principle of common but differentiated responsibility must be applied across the board. We are equally convinced that the international community must assist Small Island Developing States to incorporate climate change adaptation and mitigation concerns in national sustainable

development plans, and assist them to improve access to environmentally sound technology related to climate change.

Jamaica and other countries in the Caribbean are all too familiar with the adverse effects of climate change, and associated phenomena including sea-level rise and the increase in frequency and intensity of hurricanes and other weather events which threaten the sustainable development, livelihoods and the very existence of Small Island Developing States. In my own country, the onslaught of Hurricane Dean on 19th August resulted in the loss of life, extensive damage to infrastructure, property, the agricultural sector as well as the loss of livelihood for many.

International Peace and Security

Mr. President,

The threat of terrorism transcends boundaries and has had devastating impact on the economic development of states, whether directly or indirectly. It is imperative that we negotiate and conclude a comprehensive convention against terrorism. We must also invigorate disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

There is a need to comprehensively address the illicit traffick in small arms and light weapons which have the capacity to kill and maim thousands of people. Jamaica has first hand experience of high levels of gun violence and the unwarranted burden it places on our social and economic system. We urge the international community to give priority attention to this menace including through the creation of a legally binding instrument containing stricter controls over the illegal trade in small arms and ammunition. Likewise, we support the proposal for the establishment of an arms trade treaty.

Peacekeeping

A major priority of the United Nations is not only winning the peace, but more importantly keeping and sustaining the peace. Jamaica fully supports the work of the Peace-building Commission which earlier this year celebrated its first anniversary and whose groundbreaking work is assisting in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. As a member of the Commission, Jamaica looks forward to the continuation of the dialogue as we seek to build on the success of the recent past, always mindful that the countries under consideration require swift action to implement priority projects as part of the rehabilitation and reconstruction process.

The Caribbean Community continues to be seized of developments in Haiti. We reaffirm the importance of the continued engagement of the international community and in this regard, welcome the renewal of the mandate of MINUSTAH to assist in the stabilization process. We also encourage support from the international community towards the long term social, economic and development needs of Haiti.

Humanitarian affairs, Human Rights

Mr. President,

We must remain unwavering in our commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law. Much more needs to be done to ensure that the basic rights of individuals are universally protected and that transparent and accountable governance prevails at the local and international levels.

Jamaica is honoured to assume Chairmanship of the Third Committee during the 62nd Session of the General Assembly as part of our commitment in ensuring that human rights are promoted and protected globally. In this regard, we are particularly keen to help guide the Committee's work in promoting and protecting the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Jamaica recognizes the importance of the protection of the human rights of women which is critical to the international process aimed at achieving gender equality and the development of women.

Earlier this year a significant milestone was achieved in the adoption by the United Nations of the International Convention on Disabilities with the distinction of being one of the most supported conventions at its opening for signature. Jamaica is pleased to have been the first country to ratify the Convention and encourages others to accede to the Convention as a sign of their commitment to ensuring that the rights and dignity of the disabled are promoted and protected. We also welcome the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Groups after prolonged negotiations.

Darfur

The deteriorating humanitarian situation in Darfur remains a matter of grave concern and preoccupation of the international community. Jamaica therefore welcomes the recent unanimous adoption of Security Council Resolution 1769 for the deployment of a joint UN African Union Hybrid Force to the region. We urge the Government of Sudan to take the necessary steps to enable the expanded force to begin operations in Darfur.

Even as we look forward to the consolidation of the momentum towards a durable political solution, we are shocked and appalled at the recent attack on an AU army base in Darfur resulting in the death of 10 peacekeepers. We extend our condolences to the families of the victims and call on the Government of Sudan to ensure the safety and protection of all peacekeepers.

Institutional Reform

Mr. President,

The process of reform of the United Nations is seemingly prolonged and challenging with little or no consensus in the various proposals put forward for improvements in the functioning of the United Nations and its main organs.

We must redouble our efforts to revitalize the General Assembly so that it can effectively carry out its role and responsibility as the chief deliberative and policy-making organ of the United Nations.

We must also work towards a reformed Security Council that is more inclusive, more representative and more transparent.

Integral to the reform process, is the need for a more assertive and central role of Economic and Social Council in the promotion of social and economic cooperation and global economic governance. Important steps have been taken with the launch of the Development Cooperation Forum and the Annual Ministerial Review to bring greater focus to the role of the Council in international economic policy formulation and coordination.

Jamaica attaches importance to improving how the UN system operates at the country level. Whilst, however, we fully recognize the need to strengthen the management and coordination in the United Nations system, this effort should be responsive to the needs of recipient countries and efforts aimed at system-wide coherence should not impose additional burdens or conditionalities on developing countries

Commemoration of the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Mr. President,

This year marks the bicentenary of the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Member States of the Caribbean Community are heartened by the overwhelming solidarity of the international community in marking the event at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly in March and other activities during the course of the year to memorialize the victims of this egregious period in our history.

A significant element of the commemoration is a plan to honour the victims of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery, through the erection of a Permanent Memorial in the halls of the United Nations. We are grateful to Member States who have contributed or pledged towards the Permanent Memorial Account that has been established and look forward to your further support and contributions towards the erection of the Memorial.

Conclusion

Mr. President,

We are 192 Member States; we have the fundamental tools and the required level of expertise to effectively address the major challenges facing us today. What is now clear is that we must also have a steadfast will and a shared commitment towards a radical change from the existing mindset in favour of positive action if the United Nations is to successfully respond to the challenges which continue to hamper the attainment of its objectives for peace and sustainable development.

In calling for radical change in the existing mindset in the way we discourse and take actions on international issues, we should be guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. A change in our mindset will require a rethinking on the part of all Member States as we seek to promote world peace and achieve economic and social development. It will also require a

deep search in the conscience of all States as we seek to adhere to our obligations under international law with due regard for the collective will of the international community.

This radical change in the existing mindset will of necessity require us to be:

- more responsible as Member States of a united organization
- more responsible as citizens of this **one** world; and
- more focused on the shared responsibilities that come with our membership of the United Nations.

Let us not falter in our obligation to ensure that the organization not only remains responsive to the vast array of concerns and demands of its diverse membership, but that it is able to do so without compromising the noble ideals and principles on which it was founded. This process begins with a conscious determination and political resolve to transform not only our modus operandi, but the thinking that informs it. Jamaica stands ready to play its part in this endeavour and calls upon all Member States to do likewise.

Thank you Mr. President.