



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GENEVA**

**Address by the Honorable John R. Gagain Jr., Head of Delegation to the 12th
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) &
Executive Director, Presidential Commission on the Millennium
Development Goals & Sustainable Development (COPDES)
to the UNCTAD XII General Debate session**

GOVERNMENT OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Accra, Ghana, Africa; 22 April 2008

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Check Against Delivery

Mr. President

One of the greatest outcomes of the 2005 World Summit was that all U.N. Member States committed themselves to creating ambitious national plans for achieving the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals. The Dominican Republic was designated a pilot country, and as a result, assumed the daring responsibility of setting an example by formulating a bold strategy based on effective planning and sound development policy.

Our plan has gotten underway.

Assuming the Presidency in 2004, His Excellency Dr. Leonel Fernandez, confronted, head-on, and overcame, one of the worst economic crises in the history of the Dominican Republic. Our country saw negative levels of growth, a 100% devaluation of our currency, complete macroeconomic, political and social instability, and a surge of poverty.

Since then, this changed.

The Dominican Republic has reached Asia-level, double digit economic growth consistently. Foreign direct investment has returned, business is booming, almost 400,000 jobs have been created, poverty has subsided, and international institutions have applauded these achievements. The Dominican Republic IS today an emerging economy.

President Fernandez created the first ever "Presidential Commission on the Millennium Development Goals", to coordinate ministries, business, the U.N. System, and the community, and to prioritize and monitor the country's achievement of the Goals. We understand the importance of finding the right balance between government and business, if we are to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

We conducted an integral assessment of the country's needs for achieving the MDGs, while also aligning our national budget to the Millennium Goals. This has taken place, at the national level, every year since. We also took the Goals local by replicating this "costing analysis" of the MDGs at the provincial level, by creating our first "Pueblo del Milenio", which has now expanded to other provinces.

All of this has taken place, thanks to our commitment, to our ambitious plan.

Recently, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon & General Assembly President Srgjan Kerim both made calls for "MORE" commitment and dedication toward achieving the MDGs at the special event of the General Assembly on "Achievements and Challenges to the MDGs".

Mr. President.

We have a plan. We have political will.

What don't we have?

What we don't have is control of the challenges of globalization. We have a situation that the Dominican Republic alone, cannot control. We have a situation that no "ONE-country", could control.

We have done everything we possibly could in order to enhance economic growth and further our development.

So if we, as an emerging economy find trouble acquiring the optimal amount of financing for our development, due to the challenges of globalization, we could only imagine the trials and tribulations that the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), like those in Sub-Saharan Africa and Haiti, face.

The rising price of petroleum, the rising cost of food, non-inclusive growth, increasing inequality, and the growing danger posed by climate change, through ravaging hurricanes like the recent tropical storms Olga and Noel in the Dominican Republic, have provoked a state of concern for our well-being and riots in our neighboring country, Haiti.

Why is this of grave concern?

If we do not find a solution together, any positive progress achieved by the Dominican Republic, and countries like it, will certainly place the achievement of the MDGs in jeopardy.

We need effective multilateralism. We need international solidarity and cooperation. Our success depends upon all of us.

Our concern for the volatile situation, leads us to worry for low-income countries like those in Sub-Saharan Africa and Haiti, all of which are off-track to achieving the MDGs, and have experienced obstacles towards reaching any progress.

We must harness UNCTAD XII, as a means of combating the dire challenges that globalization presents for the 50 poorest countries.

In order to better manage the challenges of globalization, we need to maintain our economic growth. But, in order to maintain our economic growth, we must ensure it becomes more inclusive.

We have an opportunity to help ourselves by helping the “bottom billion”, the poorest of the poor.

We would like to propose helping those at “the bottom” by harnessing our economic growth and engaging in South-South cooperation with Africa. This cooperation will convert the challenges of globalization into opportunities, if it is sustainable.

South-South trade could be a key tool that ensures our economic growth results in widespread well-being:

- **IF we are careful to NOT rely exclusively upon markets.** No matter our geography or income level, we need to be conscious of the political, social, and legal facets of trade, investment, and capital markets.
- **IF we exploit the global demand for food.** We must substantially increase food production and resources acquired from this increased food production should be utilized to diversify economies by investing in education and infrastructure.
- **IF the North’s agricultural subsidies are put to an end.** They have driven this global food crisis. They impede fair competition. Not to mention, successful development models, particularly in Asia, have prompted shifts from labor-intensive agriculture to capital intensive-based industries. What country of the South could fairly compete with subsidized agriculture of the North under these conditions?

And finally,

- **IF we protect the base of our wealth—our natural resources,** which are severely threatened by climate change and environmental degradation. With droughts, whitening coral reefs, and severe flooding, prevent us from harnessing our competitive advantage.

Mr. President

A global crisis of this magnitude has shaken us all. We are awoken by its severity.

Now is the moment: to reach out to Africa, to help the “bottom billion”, to deal with our vulnerability to globalization’s challenges, and to harness recent progress achieved, as a result of economic growth.

We must convert this grave challenge before us, into an opportunity.

And as we awake to the ills of the global food crisis, our concerted action at UNCTAD XII must set the MDGs, which are at their midpoint, on an accelerated course towards their achievement.

Thank you very much.