

STATEMENT BY BARBADOS

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FOREIGN TRADE, BARBADOS TO THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND
DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is a distinct honour for me to address you on the occasion of the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Let me, from the outset, express my delegation's sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government of Brazil for the warm welcome extended to us and the major effort that has gone into the preparation for this Conference. I also would like to take this opportunity to congratulate H.E. Mr. Celso Amorim on his election as President of this session, and to assure him of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mr. President, UNCTAD XI is taking place at a challenging time for the international community. Recently the world has witnessed the emergence of new threats to global security and prosperity and some specific individual national responses thereto. At the same time, we continue to struggle to overcome the traditional threats of poverty, marginalisation and the inequitable distribution of global wealth and resources. We have also seen a worrying trend away from a

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multilateral approach to international affairs and from the shared views and values embodied within the United Nations system.

Against such a backdrop, this meeting is a notable expression of our governments' faith in and commitment to multilateralism. It also reflects our willingness to work together in a spirit of compromise and mutual respect to achieve our ultimate goal of development for all. This is a significant ideal for Barbados, which, as a small country, attaches the utmost importance to multilateralism as our principal means of achieving equality of treatment, equity and predictability in the application of rules.

This Conference, together with the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of UNCTAD, also provides a useful opportunity for Members to collectively reflect on the Organisation's achievements and its future role. It cannot be disputed that UNCTAD has a rich and successful history of which it can be justly proud. Since its inception, it has unstintingly championed the cause of developing countries, and development. What has distinguished UNCTAD over the years is its holistic approach to development, with the interests of developing countries as its paramount concern. I can do no better Mr. President, than to quote Secretary General Ricupero in his address to UNCTAD X in Bangkok, when he stated, inter alia:

"... UNCTAD's mission is not just to promote a kind of unqualified and unreserved integration of developing countries into the world economy and the trading system.... [W]hat we

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should seek is the virtuous integration of developing countries into a more receptive and coherent global economic system. In a different way, and in changed times, this effort is the continuation of the unfinished business of building a more equitable international order"

The Government of Barbados congratulates Secretary General Ricupero on UNCTAD's achievements. UNCTAD has proven itself equal to the challenge of remaining relevant in a rapidly changing international environment. Barbados has every confidence that it will continue to do so in the years ahead.

The challenges which the international community, and in particular developing countries face, demand that we focus our attention on the need for greater coherence between international processes and negotiations on the one hand, and national development strategies on the other. We believe that this Conference is well placed to give impetus to this aspect of the international economic debate.

In doing so, UNCTAD XI can support our efforts to place development - people-centred development - at the core of the multilateral trading system. Once we do this, we would have demonstrated that trade is not an end in itself, but simply a means to an end. Admittedly, while trade can contribute significantly to development, it must be stressed that there is no automatic link between trade and development. These outcomes can create

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positive synergies that could be translated into concrete action within the WTO Doha Work Programme - a programme that indeed was intended to emphasise development.

We also have the opportunity within this forum to effectively address the question of policy space for developing countries. While Barbados recognises the potential benefits of globalisation, it must be stressed that neither globalisation nor trade liberalisation should undermine our national development efforts. These processes, should, at all times, be complementary to the development thrust of developing countries.

As a corollary to this, UNCTAD XI can also help to deepen our understanding of the need for a strong and effective state. We are convinced that globalisation and the challenges and opportunities it presents necessitate not the retreat of the state, but rather a reaffirmation of its critical role in the process of the transformation of our economies. In the words of the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur,

"We cannot leave people-focused development to the serendipity of market forces".

There are some issues within the text before this Conference that are of particular importance to Barbados. I note, with appreciation, the recognition of the unique problems and vulnerabilities of small economies and the need to effectively address them. These

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countries currently face the spectre of marginalisation by a multilateral system that is supposed to provide benefits for all. Barbados looks forward to working closely with the UNCTAD Secretariat on all these issues. In particular, we will actively collaborate with the Secretariat in the preparation for the international meeting to be held in Mauritius on SIDS. We will also continue to engage the Secretariat on matters relating to the Doha Work Programme on Small Economies, with a view to facilitating these countries' fuller integration and participation in the international economic and trading system.

Barbados also has a strong interest in matters relating to transport security and logistics as well as information and communication technologies (ICTs). Our interest in these matters is two-fold; first, from the perspective of their implications for the development process; and secondly, from the point of view of seeking new and creative ways of improving our competitiveness and re-positioning ourselves within the new global economy.

Mr. President, we fully recognize that the international environment is rapidly changing and that new and non-traditional threats to our security are confronting us. However, we must be careful in our national responses to these threats, not to create barriers to legitimate international trade, particularly the trade of developing countries. It is only through international cooperation and a sharing

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of balanced responsibilities that we will be able to devise effective international strategies to counter these phenomena.

Finally, I wish to point out that the Government of Barbados has begun to implement a range of new policies to develop our cultural industries to their fullest potential. The objective of these policies is to build a national creative economy. Accordingly, Barbados welcomes UNCTAD's efforts in this area and looks forward to actively collaborating with the Organisation.

In closing, Mr. President I would simply reiterate the full support of the Government of Barbados for UNCTAD, and our best wishes for a successful conclusion to this Conference. Let us not forget that the world is watching us. We cannot afford to fail them!

I thank you.

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