



STATEMENT
BY
HONOURABLE TILLMAN THOMAS
PRIME MINISTER OF GRENADA

AT

THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President,
Hon. Heads of State and of Government,
Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to address this august body.

I do so at a time when the world continues to face multiple challenges; foremost of which for Small Island Developing States such as Grenada is their fragile economic, financial and ecological situation.

But despite these difficult circumstances, the people of Grenada demonstrate tremendous resilience. Resourcefulness, patience, and abiding faith in God, keep us going forward.

We will, therefore, not relent. Our resolve is firm: dedication, creativity, renewed commitment to fellow being, unwavering commitment to multilateralism and most of all solidarity. These, Mr. President, will help us survive these trying times.

Indeed, as it did in the past, this body can again prove to be the perfect partner in our quest to solve our problems, if only we commit ourselves to cooperate more with each other. Carefully targeted technical and other forms of assistance to countries most in need would make a vast difference in the lives of millions.

It is in this spirit that I join the many speakers who preceded me in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to guide this sixty-fifth Session of the General Assembly. You have Grenada's full support.

We commend the outgoing President, Dr. Ali Treki, for his dedication and able handling of the work of the UN in the year just ended and wish him the very best for the future.

Equally, Grenada recognizes the unrelenting stewardship and leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon as the United Nations tackle the very complex array of global issues.

Mr. President,

In her July address to the United Nations, Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II, head of the Commonwealth of Nations, concluded her remarks with customary clarity and insightfulness, affirming that the United Nations is "**a real force for good.**" Grenada supports this statement.

At the very inception of this organization, sixty-five years ago, its objectives were to avoid future wars and maintain the peace; also to partner with developing countries in their social and economic development. Grenada is satisfied that after more than six decades of existence these goals remain worthy of continuing pursuit.

In times of conflict, strife, natural disasters and other humanitarian matters, the United Nations has been the first place to turn to. Its relevance, role and involvement in global affairs remain unquestionable. Any weakening of its authority and effectiveness cannot be in our best interest. The UN *must* remain the premier organization for global diplomacy and negotiations. We must do nothing to hinder the United Nations continuance as *a real force for good in the world*. Indeed the UN must lead, not follow in global governance.

Mr. President,

Times have changed. There are new realities and therefore the United Nations must adjust accordingly. For this reason, the recent advances made in the UN "System-wide coherence" deserve special commendation.

The formation of the new body, UN Women, aimed principally at promoting the rights of women and girls and equality between the sexes is an early success of UN reform, and is embraced by Grenada. Our desire to actively participate in the fulfillment of the noble objectives of UN Women has led us to seek membership on its Executive Board. I am hopeful that Grenada's candidacy will receive strong support and be elected.

Equally, the United Nations must recognize its inherent imperatives of democracy. Continued failure to meaningfully reform the Security Council will deny this body the political legitimacy it needs to maintain and indeed to enhance its leadership role. Grenada joins with the Caribbean Community and calls for a Security Council seat for small island states as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

Climate Change is rightfully described as one of the most urgent issues facing humanity, and must remain at the top of the global diplomatic and negotiating agenda. Left unchecked the potential consequences would be catastrophic particularly for small island developing states.

Recent studies verify that over the past five decades, the planet has heated up and that ninety three percent of this warming has gone to the oceans. The consequential rise in sea level is already affecting low lying countries in the Caribbean and beyond and is undermining small economies ruining their societies and threatening their very existence.

In this regard, we continue to call for ambitious mitigation targets and welcome climate financing. US\$30 billion worth of Fast Start funding, announced in 2009 and aimed at assisting developing countries, especially the most climate-vulnerable nations, has reached only a small percentage of developing countries and just a fraction of promised funds has been released. Clearly this has to be corrected for financial assistance must be commensurate with the scale of the threat faced and should be sustained, especially for small island developing states.

Grenada welcomes the impaneling of the Secretary General's Advisory Group on Climate Financing and the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability. We anticipate that in their reports, the matter of appropriate and sustainable levels of climate change financing would be properly addressed and promoted.

Mr. President,

What an important review year this is. We applaud the meeting on Biodiversity and support the call to halt specie-loss and we welcome the convening of the High Level Session to review the Mauritius Strategy for the Implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action for the Development of Small Island Developing States.

In its capacity as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States, Grenada was privileged to play a coordinating role in this important review process and we thank all, including our development partners and the UN for undertaking this with us. Now that this body has endorsed the Political Declaration, Mr. President, we call for quick and full implementation of the MSI decisions.

Equally, Grenada welcomes the Millennium Development Goals and remains firm in its determination to achieve them.

Our report submitted in the just concluded review process indicated that while Grenada has made progress, there is much more to be done to achieve the expected goals in the remaining five years.

It is our view, that if our countries are to eliminate poverty and realize their true potential, there must be a comprehensive review of the criteria for determining middle income status. Many countries placed in that category, including Grenada, are highly indebted and deserve special attention in order to achieve sustainable development.

Small island developing states cannot attain their full potential if they are prematurely set adrift in the development ocean with a false diagnosis of full preparedness. No matter its growth pattern or level, a country with 37 percent poverty and debt to GDP ratio of over 100 percent, as is the case of Grenada, cannot be ready to sail the high seas of development financing autonomy. That day **will** come, but it is not yet here.

Mr. President,

Grenada registers its strong support for the call for a United Nations High level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD).

Currently, NCD's constitute the main cause of morbidity and mortality in our region. Life expectancy depends to a great extent on the avoidance of such illnesses and thus preventative policies must be aimed at promoting changes in life styles.

We, therefore, view with a great degree of satisfaction, the progress made by our Caribbean representatives here at the UN in articulating the need for such a meeting in 2011. I pledge Grenada's participation at the highest level.

Mr. President,

Grenada has confidence in the United Nations and in the work it can do. We unreservedly support the pursuit of international peace and security, the rule of law, the promotion of democracy and human rights and the fight against terrorism, the fight against the illicit drug trade and the many other issues that threaten our world.

Mr. President, We also believe in Justice.

The economic progress and realization of the full potential of a fellow Caribbean nation continues to be stifled by a now infamous economic embargo of over forty-five years. As a result, its people are humiliated by shortages and deprivation of basic necessities essential to decent human existence.

The vast majority of countries in the world have consistently and overwhelmingly voted in this very forum for its removal, but the irony persists.

Grenada again urges the United States of America to do what is right and completely lift the harsh economic measures against the people of Cuba, if only on humanitarian grounds.

In the spirit of fair trade and good neighbourliness, Grenada also calls on the US to honor the recent decision in favour of Antigua and Barbuda in the World Trade Organization as this too will show the operation of justice in current international interactions.

Mr. President,

Grenada reminds the world of the Caribbean Community's instant and pivotal response and continuing presence in Haiti, following the devastating earthquake earlier this year. The successful rebuilding of Haiti will benefit all, and Grenada calls for swift delivery of the pledged commitment made to that sister Caribbean Nation.

Mr. President,

We are obliged to work selflessly to preserve the world for future generations. The avoidance of a nuclear confrontation is one sure way. We therefore, congratulate the Government of the United States and all other Governments who have put much time and effort towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

We are also encouraged by recent positive signs of engagement between warring parties and are hopeful that political and military conflicts around the world and moreover in the Middle East will soon come to an end.

Grenada is particularly pleased that the Palestinians and Israelis are prepared to resume talks over their long-standing dispute with a view to finding a lasting peace once and for all.

We empathize with the many countries that have had to cope with recent natural disasters: Chile, China, Pakistan, New Zealand and Guatemala.

Mr. President,

Over the decades, the United Nations has played critical roles in almost every facet of global affairs: political, economic and social. That is its strength, its enduring mission. Grenada remains ready to work with all partners in political and economic, social and broad developmental issues in seeing the UN as a forum for working through all thorny issues.

However, there would be no international peace and stability if people are unhappy, if they have no food or clothing, if they have no potable water or shelter from adverse climatic conditions.

There would be no security if disputes cannot be settled amicably; if nations are not free to determine their own destiny and if diversity among us is not recognized and fully respected.

The world would certainly be a better place if we share our world's resources to assist the more vulnerable among us.

Mr. President,

I challenge this organization, that, for another sixty-five years, starting with this sixty-fifth session, to harness our strengths and continue to make the United Nations what we all want it to be --- **a real force for good in the world.**

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.