



SAINT LUCIA

STATEMENT BY

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Please check against delivery

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

Mr. President, let me extend the warm congratulations of the delegation of Saint Lucia on your election to serve as the President of the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly. With your vast diplomatic experience we are most confident that this session will yield significant results in advancing the agenda of the international community through this most universal of institutions – the General Assembly – which has been rightly coined by your predecessor, Miguel D’Escoto Brockman, as the “G-192.” We express our appreciation for the work of President D’Escoto Brockmann who succeeded in further elevating the General Assembly to regain its rightful place as the parliament of the world. We pledge to work with you, Mr. President, in furtherance of this approach.

We thank also Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, for his tireless efforts on behalf of us all.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Mr. President,

When developing countries agreed to the ambitious but necessary Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs) few, if any, foresaw that the winds would be contrary, the storms fierce and the course ahead so challenging!

We are more than halfway to the 2015 deadline to achieving the MDGs, and governments in the developing world are still struggling to meet their objectives. That situation, of course, is the result of developing countries facing unforeseen economic hardship from crisis after crisis that for the most part not of our own making. As the developed world appears to be in the infancy of recovery, the developing countries are still in the throngs of this crisis, and are struggling to find calmer waters.

In this connection, it is important that the Doha Round of trade negotiations be re-shaped as a development round, with emphasis on the substantial reduction of tariffs and nontariff barriers that have been imposed by developed countries, especially regarding agricultural products.

The matter of substantive debt relief to permit the developing countries to utilize their limited resources for national development is also a key consideration. The MDGs are still attainable, but the developed countries must meet their agreed commitments if these objectives are to be realized, consistent with the global timetable.

Mr. President

While all of the MDGs are relevant to the development aspirations of the people of my country and the region, we believe however, that pivotal to this process are education, poverty alleviation and strengthening institutions for good governance. These must form the bedrock for overall development.

So, despite sluggish advancement towards the realization of all the Goals, we had made significant progress on poverty and hunger, universal education, gender equality. My own country boasts of gender parity in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, a long standing problem in our region. Despite such progress continued improve is required in the other priority areas of reduction of child mortality and maternal health.

Unfortunately Mr. President, as I speak here, my government is grappling with the loss of a hospital in the south of the island which burnt down two weeks ago, resulting in the loss of lives. We have launched an appeal for assistance and hope that those most able to do so will help generously.

A New Financial Architecture

Mr. President

We in Saint Lucia, though, observe the current global state of affairs through bifocal lenses; we see both challenge and opportunity, an opportunity to take bold new steps and 'think outside the box' on tackling the issues that confront us. The right mix of appropriate policy interventions, strong political will and strategic partnerships supported by development stakeholders, are certain to help countries like Saint Lucia meet the MDGs in a timely manner. Hope is, therefore, not completely lost!

Higher prices for food, fuel and other essentials forced most developing governments to divert already scarce resources to subsidize those commodities. This then put pressure on ability to repay debts and, with mismanagement within the world financial sector, triggered a global financial and economic crisis.

The World Conference on this issue, held here at United Nations Headquarters last June to assess the worst global economic downturn since the great depression, succeeded in identifying immediate and long-term measures to mitigate the impact of the crisis, especially on developing countries, and to begin the necessary international deliberations on the restructuring of the international financial architecture.

Saint Lucia and the rest of the Caribbean Community welcomed the initiative and we participated fully in the deliberations. Saint Lucia therefore supports the measures called for in the outcome document to sustain the initiative while also providing the necessary machinery for the continued monitoring of the world economy. To this end, we emphasize the importance of strengthening the capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations, and making the International Financial Institutions more compassionate in their response and assistance to national development strategies. We look forward to analyzing the report of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of this Assembly on the implementation of the mandate, as well as the reports of the Secretary-General on the global food security crisis, the International Labour Organization report on the Global Jobs Pact and the contributions of the Inter Parliamentary Union in this new financing for development agenda.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President,

The most pressing issue and challenge facing Saint Lucia, and indeed the rest of the world, is climate change. It has emerged as the most serious developmental challenge facing mankind today; hence, demands for urgent collective action and response. We are extremely concerned that the adverse effects of climate change are constantly altering access to basic resources such as land, water and food. Decreased accessibility has threatened social security- a daily reality for many around the world. We may not disappear like the Maldives will if nothing is done, but it will certainly be expensive to survive!

On September 21, 2009, Heads of member states of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) adopted a declaration on climate change that spelt out some of the pressing issues that need to be addressed by all States. Prior to that we had the Barbados Programme of Action; the final communiqué of the 1999 AOSIS Heads of Government Meeting; the Outcome Document of the 1999 Special Session of the General Assembly to review and assess the BPOA, and the adoption in 2005 of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. All served as extensive legislative authority for concerted international action, and clearly set forth the position of the most vulnerable states. This extensive mandate provides the framework of a strategy to arrest the impact of climate change resulting in the emergence of a sustainable world for present and future generations. The convening of the 2007 High-Level Meeting, "The Future in our Hands: Addressing the Leadership Challenge of Climate Change," was also instructive in reinforcing the mandates of earlier sessions. Alas, Mr President, the rest of the world has not, it seems, seen the urgency for action.

For our own part, Saint Lucia and other Caribbean states have pledged to take voluntary mitigation measures to ensure collective survival. We are working assiduously to formulate policies and review legislation to develop our renewable energy potential in wind, solar and geothermal. We will intensify efforts to preserve our limited forest cover which serve to protect our water supply, biodiversity and are important factors in carbon sequestration. These are for us critical survival measures.

Saint Lucia has joined with other CARICOM member states to establish early warning systems to predict disasters such as floods and hurricanes. CARICOM Heads of Government also adopted the Liliendaal Declaration on Climate Change and Development which expressed the regional commitment to protect the region's marine resources and ecosystems, and in its work towards fulfilling the UNFCCC objectives.

Mr. President,

While these sustainable development practices have long term benefits, the financial investment required to support them are very onerous for Small Island Developing States. We have indicated that our governments have been proactive; however there is still the need for financial support to SIDS in order for them to enhance their capacity to respond to challenges brought on by climate change. *Let me remind again that these problems are not of our doing.*

Lack of access to cost-effective, affordable, and environmentally sound technologies significantly threaten to stagnate or reverse progress already made. As well, mitigation will not be enough if not supported by adaptation measures. We therefore urge states to fulfil their commitment to the Adaptation Fund that will help us cope with changes that have made life difficult for many a people.

We the SIDs and LDCs have joined together to demand, appeal and even beg, if necessary, that the new Copenhagen Climate Agreement limit temperature increases to the attainable level of 1.5 degrees Celsius, as possibly anything above that will be devastating to our existence. We urge other inhabitants of planet earth to be understanding and cooperative, as we work to “seal the deal” in Copenhagen. If we cannot reverse or slow climate change effects, all other activities, as noble as they may be, will be useless to mankind.

MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES

Mr. President,

Our efforts to advance our own development progress are sometimes derailed because of the lack of resources and a peculiar ‘grouping’ that excludes many states from accessing certain types of aid, loans or development assistance currently available only to least developed states, ironically, because of our success in managing our affairs. It would appear that we are being punished for being prudent in the management of our limited resources.

Middle income countries like Saint Lucia continue to face significant challenges in reducing poverty, in debt servicing and achieving the MDGs. My government is pleased to note that the United Nations and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have recognized that there is a need to address the development needs of middle-income countries and to reinforce the global support for their development effort. We are cognizant that this group of countries is not homogeneous and that individual economic and social circumstances must be taken into account. However, as a group, we deserve greater attention from the donor community and the United Nations system. We hope our pleas do not fall on deaf ears, and assistance will not be too late.

SOUTH –SOUTH & TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

Mr. President,

While we bemoan the slow pace of assistance from the North, we are appreciative of the efforts of our traditional friends, UK, US, Canada, France, the EU, Japan, to name a few, to meet their ODA targets and agreed commitments. However, the significance of cooperation between developing countries cannot be overlooked. South-South cooperation has become an effective tool for economic development and foreign policy, and constitutes one of the most important dimensions of international cooperation for development, particularly in the context of globalization and liberalization.

As well, South-South cooperation is an imperative to complement North-South cooperation and to strengthen the institutional capacities of the countries of the South to engage in sustainable development practices. An ever-changing global landscape has impelled developing countries

to take initiatives to safeguard the common interests of each other as they possess diverse assets that can be complementary.

This has been our goal within CARICOM and we thank the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for so often leading the way on these matters. As well, the Government of Saint Lucia wishes to express its gratitude for the assistance provided by the Republic of Cuba, whose international medical assistance programme has served the people of the region, the wider hemisphere and beyond. We express our appreciation for the support that we have received from other countries in our region including the Latin American states, of Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, to name a few.

The historic cultural ties between Africa and the Caribbean are well known, and the cooperation between our two regions is being strengthened through recent developments such as the African Union Diaspora initiative and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Secretariat.

We in Saint Lucia have received support from the Kuwaiti Funds to assist in infrastructural development. In short, Mr President, we are reaching out to the world for cooperation and collaboration in the advancement of our development efforts, within the framework of respect for each other and for humankind.

That is why, **Mr President**, The Government of Saint Lucia joins with other delegations in extending our deep condolences to the government and people of Taiwan following the devastation and the loss of life caused by the disastrous August 2009 typhoon. Taiwan has assisted Saint Lucia in the areas of education, agriculture, health and other fields critical to our development efforts. Their assistance in agriculture, especially, has enabled us to improve our agricultural output and position ourselves for breaking into the food export market. Taiwan has extended a helping hand to all those who have requested. It seeks only to be part of the family of nations to share its knowledge and expertise with the rest of the world. This is not too much to ask. We are pleased to note that some positive steps have been taken in that respect and we hope that these will continue, with other agencies opening their doors to participation and enable 23 million people to make their contribution to their fellow human beings, and to realize their aspirations as we in Saint Lucia did, 30 years ago.

As well, we extend our sympathies to the Government and people of the Philippines on the loss and life and destruction caused by the passage of typhoon Ketsana three days ago.

St. Lucia joins with other CARICOM countries in expressing profound concern about, and deep disappointment with the decision by the Administering Power to dissolve the Government and the legislature in the non self-governing territory of the Turks and Caicos Islands, an associate member of CARICOM. We call for a speedy return to democratic governance, without which the territory's participation in the regional integration process will be in jeopardy.

OTHER NEW CHALLENGES

Mr. President,

Economic diversification for small states is critical to their ability to remain competitive in an ever increasing globalised economy, and many small states have developed vibrant financial service industries which have evolved as clean, competitive industries in a world economy increasingly dependent on services. Clearly, the competitiveness of tax rates and international tax competition are fundamental tools of globalisation, and one of the few areas where small states have been able to enter this new economy from a competitive position.

To this end, St. Lucia joined with other CARICOM states in adopting last July the *Liliendaal Declaration on the Financial Sector – a New Framework for Financial Regulation and Supervision in the Region*. It is important to note that the regional policy contains provisions for “*continued improvement in standards for disclosure, transparency and corporate governance for both public and private companies,*” in order to ensure *effective surveillance, regulation and supervision.*”

However, despite our best efforts, “international financial centres in the Caribbean (and elsewhere) have recently been under intense pressure” from high tax nations. In this regard, St. Lucia joins with our regional partners in continuing to enhance transparency by the strengthening of regulatory frameworks. We stand with our CARICOM colleagues in calling for “equitable treatment in accord with that granted to the developed countries and other preferential jurisdictions.”

SECURITY

Mr. President,

It matters little if we are rich but insecure in our homes and our country, and that is why, in recent years, the issue of small arms and light weapons has emerged as a major source of concern to us. Small developing states like Saint Lucia continue to be threatened by the disturbing spread of small arms. The illicit introduction of these weapons into our societies has created a heavy burden in our region which has seen the emergence of an unacceptable level of gun violence, worsened by the social distress caused by the economic and financial crisis.

In this connection St. Lucia reiterates its support for the implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions on the “*Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects,*” most recently, Resolution 63/72 of 2nd December 2008. St. Lucia also wishes to express its continual support for the full implementation of the *International Instrument to Enable States to identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons* (the International Tracing Instrument).

On top of all our financial problems we seem to be asked to bear an unfair burden in relation to world peace and security. While ensuring an effective funding mechanism is the collective responsibility of the membership we concur that the future scale of assessments should be constant, simple and transparent. We fully give our backing to the view of the Committee on

Contributions (CoC) that the scale should be based on gross national income (GNI) data, as it is the most accurate reflection of capacity to pay.

Mr. President:

In the face of all the challenges outlined above and in this present state of world affairs, it is no longer pragmatic to utilize attenuated financial and technical assistance schemes designed so long ago. These have given way to development challenges that are often astronomical and more nebulous, necessitating long-term, cumulative responses. In short Mr. President, the world is in crisis management mode and it is seriously affecting the ability of developing countries to move forward and onward to progress.

Crisis management, though, must be undertaken with sustainable development in mind and integrated into the policy-making processes by both donor and recipient countries. Coordination and collaboration, therefore, are essential within and among governments, organizations and local communities if a sustainable and forward looking approach is to be achieved.

We chose as our theme: ***Effective responses to global crises: Strengthening multilateralism and dialogue among civilizations for international peace, security and development.***

I hope that this august body, made up of a diverse group of countries, will work together in achieving the goals to which we all aspire.

Like Jason and his good ship ARGO, Fair Helen, Saint Lucia, will brave the seas, chart a new course and take our people to the heights of development and dignity that befits a country that has produced two Nobel Laureates.

I thank you.

