



Permanent Mission of St. Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

THE HONORABLE DR. DENZIL L. DOUGLAS

PRIME MINISTER &
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE FEDERATION OF ST. KITTS & NEVIS

AT THE 64TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SATURDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2009

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK

Check Against Delivery

Thank you, Mr. President:

Colleagues, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

1. It is, indeed, an honour to address you on the occasion of the 64th General Assembly of the United Nations. Today, we converge in this chamber to outline how, from the perspective of our respective nations, this esteemed body might uphold the rights of all mankind, secure world peace, and indeed, ensure the very survival of planet earth. We converge here in order to arrive at some collective insight regarding the interests of the world's various peoples, as well as the interests of humankind itself. We have come here not only to be heard but more importantly to listen and ultimately to commit ourselves both as a body and as independent, sovereign states, to constructive, ameliorative action.
2. Mr. President, I congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the Sixty-fourth Session of the General Assembly and assure you of my government's full support. And if I may, through you, let me thank your predecessor, His Excellency, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua for his leadership during his presidency of the 63rd United Nations General Assembly.
3. Mr. President, our world is defined by global issues at the levels of politics, the environment, trade or finance. Last year's financial crisis, which continues to reverberate throughout the world, stands as a sobering reminder of the interconnectedness of our economies and that multilateralism is indispensable. Whether we speak about global trade, monetary and fiscal policies, human rights protection, health and public security and protecting the environment, these issues have become interlinked. And their complexity means that no country can act alone. Recent events have called into focus the need for proper regulatory frameworks to manage the world financial systems. The circumstances, which precipitated the virtual collapse of several financial institutions, were not created by small states such as St. Kitts and Nevis. Yet, as in the case of climate change, their consequences are forced upon us and we are left to fend for ourselves.
4. But if we are to learn anything from the crises we face today, it should be that collective action and partnership are necessary, not only in the management of conflicts, but also in building effective, comprehensive and sustainable infrastructures to protect our citizens' future. The ever-changing global landscape will require, for some time to come, that governments and institutions, work to establish common regimes and international regulatory frameworks.

5. To this end, Mr. President, my government will support an enhanced role for political forums such as the United Nations to strengthen multilateralism. We owe this much to the citizens around the world who still look to the United Nations for hope rooted in the belief that through our efforts their aspirations would be realized. I understand. We live in complex times. And unexpected developments challenge our resolve daily. But we cannot relent. We must double our efforts and use the convening power and political authority of this Organization, and others like it, to find common grounds even in the face of strident and sometimes divergent views. This is how we build that indispensable architecture to create a legacy worthy of future generations. It is no small feat, Mr. President. It is in fact a monumental task. But the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis is confident that your central role in the coming year will help us to craft a template for collective action.
6. I would like this General Assembly to see the world from the perspective of a small middle-income heavily indebted country. Mr. President, the country that I have the honour of leading, is a small one, the smallest nation in the western hemisphere. Despite the recent downturn, small economies like ours continue to display resilience and make the necessary sacrifices to sustain ourselves. As far as our access to capital is concerned, the result of hard work and sound management have harsh and destabilizing implications, with unwelcome restrictions vis-à-vis debt relief and other key matters. The international economic crisis has made clear the urgent need for the restructuring and repair of the global economic system.

7. As this moves forward, I urge that the very real vulnerabilities of small states that happen to have high per capita GDP's be more clearly considered and reflected in multi-lateral policies, deliberations, and procedures. We seek support for a new debt forgiveness initiative within the framework of reform of the international financial institutions and the materialization of the concept of middle-income highly indebted countries where peculiarities and vulnerabilities no longer trigger the types of punitive actions.
8. In addition, the global economic crisis, begun far beyond our shores, has nonetheless, made its way there, causing my country to have to develop and introduce its own stimulus package, forcing us to sacrifice urgently needed tax revenues in the interest of protecting employment, and necessitating our finding the means to shore up and advance the viability of our private sector.

9. We are continuing to invest in our people through education, retraining programs and by working to attract international investments in critical sectors to generate employment and other business opportunities. By doing this, we hope to prepare for the future when the global economy eventually rebounds.
10. It is no secret that our efforts can sometimes amount to very little because, for no fault of our own, it is a fact that when global crises occur small vulnerable economies tend to pay a disproportionately high price. But under my leadership, St. Kitts and Nevis will not play victim or assign blame. We prefer instead to work vigorously at the national level and to collaborate

actively internationally to introduce measures and systems that transform our economy and improve the lives of our citizens.

11. Going forward, we want our voices and ideas to inform whatever new architecture is developed to avoid the mistakes of the past. Therefore, we will support the measures established to follow up on issues pertaining to recovery from the global financial and economic crises. And, we intend to participate enthusiastically in the process to ensure that the recovery is comprehensive.
12. Mr. President, we have common challenges and shared responsibility to tackle them. We, in the Caribbean, have repeatedly called on the international community to recognize the special circumstances that attend the realities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) not as a favour to us but as a practical way of addressing the multifaceted and complex issues we face. For instance, on the issue of environmental protection, the government of St. Kitts and Nevis has always urged a multilateral approach.
13. The interconnectedness of our planet, then, is indeed real. And nowhere is it more so than on the issue of climate change. Whereas small countries like St. Kitts and Nevis have tiny carbon footprints in terms of negative environmental impact, global warming and climate change and their effects do not discriminate. We can all agree that the incidence of catastrophic climatic events such as hurricanes, floods, and mudslides continue to claim more and more lives each year.
14. The geography of our small islands is changing. Sea levels are rising and the marine life on which many of our citizens depend for their livelihoods are fast diminishing. Our coastlines are being affected. Our reefs are paying a price. The long-term implications for food production are dire. Again, though begun far beyond our shores, climate change has been inflicting a massive and disproportionate blow on nations like mine, causing us to now urge, in the strongest terms, timely and effective action. St. Kitts and Nevis is not interested in stale debates about blame. We are interested in action. And we want to play our part.
15. In the interest of advancing global stability, therefore, we urge unrelenting commitment to emission targets by industrialized nations. We urge that the major global emitters take the lead in ensuring that the resources are in place for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to meet our adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer, and capacity building goals. And we urge that the emitters embrace the measures needed to compensate for the risks and losses resulting from climate change.
16. We continue to collaborate regionally and to work towards efforts in disaster preparedness, reduction and mitigation. We recognize that high dependence on fossil fuels is untenable. Therefore with support from the Organization of American States (OAS) and private enterprise we are exploring renewable sources of energy including geo-thermal energy in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis.

17. Mr. President, as the Kyoto Protocol gets set to expire, my government welcomes the recent commitments by some industrialized economies to do more to address harmful emissions. I hope this will translate into concrete results on the environment and climate change at the Copenhagen Summit later this year.
18. I urge the United Nations to strengthen and finance the SIDS Unit to be more effective in addressing the concerns of member states. I look forward to the Unit's assistance as we work towards the Five Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) during the 64th session. I urge Member States to ensure that the agreed upon goals of the Mauritius Strategy and the commitments made be implemented, and to support initiatives proposed during the review exercise.
19. Mr. President, in multilateralism, constructive partnership is an effective strategy. In this approach, we are forced to appreciate the value of belonging; the need for all peoples of the world to be embraced within the fraternity of nations and to be allowed to contribute to the common good. The Republic of China on Taiwan, so long a constructive partner to a range of countries around the world, has a great deal to contribute to the specialized agencies of the United Nations such as United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) given that climate change and aviation safety affect its own development as well as the well-being of all mankind.
20. ~~Mr. President, the issue of security continues to be prominent on the international agenda and the global anti-crime campaign intensifies, as concern heightens in the face of emerging threats to the citizenry as well as the society. This development results from the new wave of crime and violence, especially among the youth population. In the hemisphere there is increased focus on human security in relation to the transnational nature of those categories of crime (illicit trafficking in drugs and firearms) that are linked to anti-social behaviors among our youths.~~
21. The emerging trend in the analysis of crime, globally, points to a new variable: youths as victims of crime. Studies show that in increasing numbers, victims and perpetrators of crime are young men. The reality of coexisting in a global village, the prevalence and sophistication of modern technology, enhanced communication infrastructure, and the free movement of capital and people have given rise to unprecedented escalation in crime and violence.
22. Youth alienation, youth rage, and youth brutality are troubling global phenomena in urgent need of global analysis and action. And so, this moment demands that this body, with its unique capacities and capabilities, and in our quest for international societal stability, marshal all available resources to better identify the underlying causative factors, and to come to clear agreement as to how, individually and collectively, we halt and reverse this destabilizing trajectory.
23. Violence is a multi-sectoral public policy challenge impinging on several areas including public security, governance, development and public health.

The human, social and financial costs of violence are unacceptably high. In addition to physical injury and death, violence has a serious and life-long impact on mental and physical health, including non-communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS, and damages the social fabric leading to unsafe communities. Ultimately, violence slows economic and social development in those countries which can least afford it. However, scientific evidence amassed over the last years clearly demonstrates that violence and its consequences can be successfully prevented. But, at present an integrated approach to violence prevention is lacking. An attempt to define a regional response to the problem was made at a recent two-day regional symposium, held 22nd and 23rd June this year in St Kitts and Nevis, under the theme: *"Confronting the challenges of youth crime and violence: Defining a multi-sectoral response"*.

24. We would like to call upon Member States to join us in tabling a Resolution in support of an integrated approach and multi-sectoral response to violence prevention. This we would wish to place on the agenda of the 65th Session of the General Assembly.
25. Mr. President, my government strongly condemns all forms of violence including transnational organized crimes and terrorism. And while we commend the United Nations for its continued assistance to member states in our crime fighting efforts, we urge its support for the re-opening of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the Caribbean region, in that spirit of developing an effective multilateral approach.

26. The challenges we must meet are so vast, Mr. President. The non-proliferation of nuclear weapons today, and a world free of nuclear weapons tomorrow, should be the goal of us all.
27. Mr. President, within a Pan-Caribbean Partnership (PANCAP), we continue developing and expanding regional responses to the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. The problems posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a real and growing threat not only in terms of loss of life and livelihood but also to the extent that it eliminates the most productive groups in society and demand outlays of capital that would otherwise have been targeted towards economic and social development. The Caribbean Community, through the Pan Caribbean Partnership, has made gains in tackling the medical aspect of the disease.

28. But we need to do more to fight stigma and discrimination, and to increase access to inexpensive antiretroviral drugs and treatment for those infected with the disease. With the help of the international community we can reconcile the objective need of pharmaceuticals to receive proper compensation for their research, development and investment without prejudice to those who are in urgent need of care and without politicising the issue.
29. In conclusion, Mr. President; my government applauds your initiative of pursuing effective responses to global crises and strengthening multilateralism. For St. Kitts and Nevis, multilateralism is a sine qua non and

the only effective approach to lasting peace, effective security and sustainable development. We have seen the fallouts from unilateral action. Many of us had to pay the price for the decisions and actions made in isolation by a few.

30. It is the fundamental right of all humankind to choose its own destiny. At the same time, we have a collective duty to act responsibly, and to work in the interest of the common good. This is the premise of multilateralism; this is the promise of my government and my delegation stands prepared and willing to support you.
 31. Hubert H. Humphrey, former Vice President of the United States, felt it necessary to emphasize to individuals like those of us in this hall today, our responsibility to ensure that the United Nations is a force for verifiable, constructive change in the world. In reminding us – and those who will come after us – of what is expected of us, he said, “The heroes of the world community are not those who withdraw when difficulties ensue, not those who can envision neither the prospect of success nor the consequence of failure-- but those who stand the heat of battle, the fight for world peace through the United Nations.”
 32. This we must do
 33. I thank you
-