



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PERMANENT MISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT

by

The Honourable Patrick Manning

**Prime Minister of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

at the

**General Debate of the Sixty-fourth
Session of the United Nations
General Assembly**

**NEW YORK
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Mr. President,

Trinidad and Tobago extends its sincerest congratulations on your ascension to the stewardship of this 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We know that your vast experience and leadership qualities will ensure very successful deliberations. We also pay tribute to your predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann of Nicaragua for his vision and fearless discharge of his responsibilities as President of the 63rd Session.

We convey our very best wishes to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whom we welcomed to Port-of-Spain earlier this year when Trinidad and Tobago hosted the Fifth Summit of the Americas. We assure him of our continuing support, as he continues his mission to ensure that the United Nations meets the new challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Global Economic Situation

We meet at a time of very serious challenges for the world economy. We are now beginning to emerge from a global recession caused by a near collapse of the international financial system. But there is no room for complacency. Unemployment continues to grow in almost every country, credit remains contracted and consumer confidence, that most critical factor, persists at very low levels. Additionally, there is no certainty about a steady upward trajectory for the global economy. Valued opinion on this matter points to the possibility of further recessionary trends before the present 'green shoots' produce flourishing green fields.

We clearly cannot take our eye off the ball. We must not return to business as usual. We should not countenance the resurfacing of discredited patterns on financial streets and capitals. We must be very wary of the level of adventurousness in leading financial institutions, which contributed very significantly to driving the world to the edge of an economic precipice, from which we are just starting to pull back.

There is justification for concern about this situation by every country on this planet. In the globalised economy, we are all affected by policies or actions that direct the international financial system.

We of the smaller countries and the developing world have always been the most vulnerable and the worst affected. It is happening again. Especially in the Southern Hemisphere, the prospects have grown for increase in poverty, unemployment and general slippage in the development process. How much longer will this acute vulnerability of so many nations persist, Mr. President? How many more dreams must now, once again, be deferred?

Reform of the International Economic System

The trust of the world in the totally unregulated market has been entirely misplaced. We must now capitalize on the opportunity of this crisis and, without delay, reform our international economic system. The global architecture must be transformed to take into account the new realities. Among these are new and emerging centres of economic power, and the now indispensable need to deliberately generate growth in the developing world, if the global economy is to achieve resurgence and sustainability. In this extremely interconnected world, Mr. President, it is our collective resources, ingenuity, productivity, markets and technology that will keep all of us afloat. Let this General Assembly, therefore, play its part in ensuring that we leave behind the old approaches that suffocated development of the many for the benefit of the few. Let it call for greater recognition of the absolute need to bring into the global mainstream, the entire productive and purchasing capacity of this planet, our collective home.

We are heartened by developments and decisions among the G20 countries. But we must ensure that there is absolutely no reversal of the new approach; no dimming of the new light that the present crisis has generated; no diminution of the acceptance that we are all in this together and that development everywhere translates into prosperity for all.

Let us, therefore, ensure that the reform of the International Financial Institutions does indeed take place; that we entrench greater sensitivity to the varying needs of countries at differing levels of development; that new voices, representing more of humanity, are in the decision making process; and that the resource flows for trade and investment are in fact realized and activated.

CARICOM, Middle Income Countries and Haiti

Mr. President,

The Caribbean Community has not been spared the debilitating effects of the current global economic situation. Most CARICOM States are now experiencing economic contraction and rising levels of unemployment, with their challenging social consequences. It is therefore regrettable, that some Middle-Income Countries, such as many in CARICOM, may not be eligible for funding under some of the World Bank facilities for International Development Assistance.

Given their vulnerabilities, the need must not be underestimated for access to concessionary financing by Middle-Income Countries. This was highlighted at the 2008 Conference in Namibia, which called for enhanced levels of international developmental assistance for these countries and noted that the current categorization does not

accurately reflect the particularities and needs of these nations. This General Assembly must take steps to advance the cause of Middle Income Countries in this matter.

The situation in Haiti is one of grave concern. We are encouraged by the diverse United Nations-related initiatives, aimed at promoting peace and security in that country. But greater attention is required by the international community. Arising out of the Fifth Summit of the Americas, Trinidad and Tobago has advanced a proposal for the Establishment of a Hemispheric Development Fund for Haiti, to which all Western hemisphere countries are expected to contribute. Haiti is first and foremost a Western Hemisphere challenge and we see this fund as essential to the re-establishment of proper standards of living in that country. We bring this matter before the General Assembly for its support.

Security

One of the very significant problems facing the global community is organized transnational crime of increasing strength, including terrorist activity, as well as the illegal traffic in drugs, arms and persons. The Caribbean is particularly plagued by the illegal drug trade, which uses our region as a transshipment route for its pernicious cargo headed towards North America and Europe. This activity has a most corrosive effect on our small societies, fuelling, for example, trafficking in small arms and light weapons, with troubling consequences. In CARICOM, we have been pooling our resources in the fight. There is now unprecedented cooperation among the legal and security systems of our countries, but we need more resources in our struggle with this menace.

We will continue to engage in the various processes of the UN, aimed at addressing this problem. We encourage those Member States which have not been supportive of the initiative to negotiate a legally binding Arms Trade Treaty to join the fold of States working to ensure that it becomes a reality.

But Mr. President, the security situation has been aggravated by the deteriorating economic situation in many of our countries, weakened by the loss of preferential markets for bananas and sugar. The new paradigm of reciprocity in trade, and the fact that both the tourism industry and the financial services sector to which many have turned to supplement their economic development have not produced the anticipated returns. The economic situation of these countries has therefore become even more critical, with severe consequences for the security and prosperity of our region, given the inextricable link between security and socio-economic development.

Climate Change

Mr. President,

Climate Change is today one of the major challenges facing our civilization. The Secretary-General must be highly commended for his commitment to dealing with this issue, which he declared as a priority at the start of his tenure. In this regard, we add our voice to those who have been high in praise for the just concluded United Nations Summit on Climate Change. This General Assembly must promote more meaningful action towards an internationally acceptable formula for the reduction of carbon emissions.

Trinidad and Tobago makes it absolutely clear that we do not accept the per capita basis for the determination of level of carbon emission. This is manifestly unfair to a small, energy-producing, developing country like ours with a small population. We consider the method of absolute emissions a more just method of determining a country's contribution to global warming, since it is affected not by per capita emissions, but by absolute levels. The question of population size has nothing to do with it whatsoever.

We also give you the assurance, Mr. President, that, our country has already voluntarily embarked on reducing emissions through a programme that includes the pursuit of renewable sources of supply. We will also be hosting the fifty-three-member Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Port of Spain in November of this year. This will be the last major summit before the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in December. We propose to use the opportunity to attempt to forge a consensus that would reflect the common views of the Commonwealth comprising, as it does, both high greenhouse gas emitters and some of the countries most threatened by climate change. We are determined, Mr. President, to do all in our power to ensure agreement in Copenhagen.

Non-Communicable Diseases

We are firmly of the view that non-communicable diseases demand heightened attention by the international community at this time. It is forecasted that by 2020, NCDs will account for about 73% of global deaths and 60% of the global burden of diseases. We join the call for indicators on non-communicable diseases and injuries to be integrated into the core Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) monitoring and evaluation system.

We have taken on board this matter at the level of CARICOM. Indeed, we held a special Regional Summit in Port of Spain on Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases in 2007. I now propose to this august Assembly, that a Special Session of the United

Nations General Assembly on Non-Communicable Diseases be convened at the earliest opportunity.

Food Security

Mr. President,

The year 2015 is fast approaching but there is sadly no encouraging progress towards our Millennium Development Goal of food security for all by this date. Indeed we have fallen behind in our schedule, with increase in deaths from hunger and malnutrition in the developing world. A much greater sense of urgency is needed in our approach to this situation. All countries must honour their commitments made at the 2008 World Summit on Food Security. Trinidad and Tobago therefore looks forward to the next World Summit on Food Security scheduled for Rome in November with the expectation that the results would aid the international community in achieving the revised target set by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to eradicate hunger by 2025.

UN Reform

My country is committed to an international order based on peace, security and the right to development of all countries. We believe that democracy and representation are key to achieving meaningful and effective multilateralism. We therefore again wish to support efforts at reform of the United Nations Security Council. Reform of this important organ of the United Nations which has the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security must include efforts aimed at making its composition more reflective of the global geo-political realities which have occurred since the end of the second World War.

Conclusion

Mr. President,

In this new century, the United Nations must become an even more effective voice for all of mankind. We have very important work ahead of us at a very challenging time in our history.

Let us never lose sight of our main purpose, which is the security and development of the people of the world. Let us renew our focus on this main objective.

Let us therefore support the reign of fundamental freedoms and human rights in every country; let us strive for individual empowerment of citizens in every nation; let there be opportunity and upward mobility for all; let none be marginalized on the periphery; and let the abundant talent and potential of humanity flower everywhere, serving as inspiration, guidance and example to present and future generations.

Let us therefore join our strengths for the benefit of all. Let us indeed build a global community where there is increasing and intensified cooperation and communication among our nations; where no country lags behind; and where all nations and their peoples enter the international highroad of development.

Thank you, Mr. President.