

# COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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## STATEMENT BY

**H.E. MR. VINCE HENDERSON  
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA**

**AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE  
SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**New York, September 27, 2011**

Please check against delivery

**Your Excellency Nassir Abdulaziz Al- Nasse, President of the General Assembly**

**Your Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations**

**Your Excellencies**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation and the government and people of the Commonwealth of Dominica, I would like to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and to assure you of the full cooperation of my country and delegation. We are confident that with your skills and experience, you will give leadership to this Assembly and the extensive and important agenda of this 66<sup>th</sup> Session.

I also extend a special welcome to the newest member of this Assembly - the Republic of South Sudan which became the 193rd member of this body in July of this year.

Mr. President, I would also like to convey Dominica's appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Joseph Deiss, for so ably guiding the proceedings of the 65th Session of the General Assembly and express our gratitude for the continued efforts of His Excellency Ban Ki-Moon for his leadership at this most challenging time.

***Climate Change – from Cancun to Durban***

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, this meeting is being convened at a time of tremendous global insecurity. Never in the history of mankind have we had to grapple for our own existence as we have done in this last decade. We are still faced with unstable global financial markets, issues of food availability and affordability, increasing unrest in some regions, high cost of energy, and we seem set to endure mounting consequences of mother earth's response to decades of global warming.

Mr. President, countries like Dominica located in the Caribbean basin, are again in the hurricane season. A period of high vulnerability that we in the Caribbean experience for a period of four to six months each year. Fresh in our minds are the recent unfortunate events in the United States. For the first time in its recorded

history, this city in which we are convened, came to a complete standstill because of Hurricane Irene in late-August.

We in the Caribbean understand clearly the challenges faced in the aftermath of hurricanes as these are the kinds of disasters that small island states such as Dominica are forced to routinely schedule on our calendar of events and brace for every six months. For us, each year's recovery efforts could become next year's destruction point. On behalf of my delegation I extend my condolences and empathize with all those who were affected by hurricane Irene.

Mr. President, for reasons such as these, each year we come before this Assembly to report not only the deterioration of the environment, but also on the deterioration of the Climate Change negotiations.

With full knowledge that these impacts are projected to increase, over time, we believe, Mr. President, that we can build on a number of outcomes agreed to in Cancun. We also believe that although some responses might not meet every member's expectation, they could act as catalysts and springboard new approaches and new solutions, in Durban.

Mr. President, as witnesses of environmental degradation, where the reliance on the ecosystem for energy provision for basic needs continue to intensify, we as a people cannot continue to ignore the subject of Climate Change. We believe that Climate Change is an energy-related issue, and the provision of reliable, accessible and affordable energy and its by-products are critical to sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

Mr. President, despite unfulfilled promises and a slow start to 'Fast Start', we must report on actions advanced since Cancun that has helped position SIDS to transform their energy sectors. Significantly, I refer to the SIDS Sustainable Energy Initiative – SIDS DOCK. Mr. President, almost 30 SIDS have signed an agreement to establish this initiative created by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) under the chairmanship of Grenada, and in partnership with the Government of Denmark, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Bank.

We wish to thank the Government of Denmark for their significant financial contribution to operationalize this facility and for the leadership that it has and continues to give to the process. My delegation expresses its gratitude to the other members of AOSIS for staying the course and reaffirms Dominica's commitment to this initiative.

Mr. President, SIDS DOCK was the outstanding outcome for SIDS at Cancun, and as we set our sights on Durban, the expectation is that other partners will support the initiative that is set to transform the energy sector in SIDS. It is our hope that sufficient progress will be made in negotiating appropriate measures that might be implemented to address Loss and Damage associated with the adverse effects of Climate Change, including impacts related to extreme weather as well as slow onset events.

These two initiatives are within the framework of the Bali Road Map and Action Plans and reflect actions that are geared towards the fulfillment of commitments and to give effect to Cancun decisions.

Mr. President, it is no secret that the Kyoto Protocol (KP) is in serious trouble. While it represents less than 30 percent of Green House Gas (GHG) emissions, it remains the only legally binding Global Agreement in our quest to address the growing threat of Climate Change. In order to build on the gains made under the first commitment period we must ensure that the broad principles secured in the Kyoto Protocol are maintained in any legally binding Global Agreement at Durban.

### ***Rio +20 UNCSD***

Mr. President, a sustainable energy sector is the foundation for sustainable development in small island states like Dominica. For the past decade, Dominica has been working towards the development of our geothermal potential with the assistance of international agencies and development partners.

With the support and contribution of The European Union, the Government of France, the Regional Councils of Guadeloupe and Martinique, we are now closer to the realization of our goal. Preparation for drilling has begun and the three test wells will be complete by the end of this year.

The development of our geothermal potential will provide us with the capacity to meet our domestic needs and to supply electricity to our neighbouring islands especially the French Territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique through our connection via submarine cables. With this displacement of hundreds of megawatts of fossil generated power, coupled with our sustainable development practices, Dominica's target is not only to be carbon neutral, but also carbon negative by the year 2020.

Mr. President like Dominica, many SIDS are pursuing their own renewable energy initiatives. However, the unsustainable debt burdens and the lack of technology have made such initiatives almost impossible for some SIDS. We invite other developed countries and international institutions to join the governments of Denmark in the SIDS DOCK, and Norway in its 'Energy for All' initiative, in providing the critical support that SIDS so desperately need.

Mr. President, we in the SIDS are committed to playing our part, suffice to say, that there are still some major obstacles impeding the pace of progress, particularly financing for SIDS-appropriate technology and transfer. Mr. President, as part of the Rio+20 process, Dominica calls on the Secretary-General to establish a Special SIDS-Appropriate Technology Fund to address innovative financing for sustainable energy technology transfer and development for Small island states, and in this regard, Mr. President, we also ask that the Secretary-General consider appointing a Goodwill Ambassador, tasked with advocating on behalf of SIDS and helping the Secretary-General in supporting the Fund. Effective transfer and development of SIDS-appropriate technology is essential for SIDS to build resilience to the present and future impacts of climate change.

In addition to looking forward to securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development at Rio +20, SIDS expect that the international community will reaffirm their support with new and additional resources required to implement programmes and activities agreed to from Agenda 21 to the Barbados Programme of Action, (BPoA) to the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the BPoA.

Mr. President, any renewed commitments and agreements reached at the Rio +20 must address the major impediments to implementing these summit outcomes, including limited technical, financial and human resources, as well as the impact of exogenous factors, particularly the global financial crisis currently.

### ***Arms Trade Treaty***

Mr. President, there is no denying the importance of national security to a society, thus the unregulated, non-standardized and highly dangerous arms and ammunition trade poses great threats to law and order in our societies.

The Caribbean region is not a manufacturer of arms or ammunition, yet, numerous illegal firearms and ammunition often associated to the illegal drug trade are transferred across our borders, infiltrating our society and causing deaths and mayhem, overburdening our health system and contributing to destabilization of

economic progress and wellbeing. The region has lost some of its most productive members to this unregulated transfer of arms. This is an unsustainable situation for any country, but more so for small island states.

Mr. President, negotiations on an Arms Trade Treaty are welcomed, and as stated in CARICOM's Declaration on Small Arms and Light Weapons Dominica is committed to full and active participation in all efforts related to the issue of small arms. Of particular importance is the 2012 Review of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, and the 2012 United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty.

### ***Global Peace and Security***

Mr. President, in the absence of these and other initiatives to help combat global insecurity, threats to global peace and security will continue to multiply both in intensity and form. Multilateralism must take centre stage in the struggle to deal with these challenges. The work of the United Nations, therefore, is paramount in maintaining world peace and security. In its maintenance of this role, the United Nations must be able to clearly demonstrate legitimacy and fairness in its actions cognizant always, of the need to protect the most vulnerable.

Mr. President, the ability of the UN Security Council to adequately respond to new and changing world dynamics, rests in its acceptance of the need for continuous reform to adapt to the times, including recognition of the increase in size of the UN membership and global economic power shifts. Reform reflects more than representation and in this situation should promote adaptation to the needs of members and the drafting of strategies that would contribute to ending wars and halting disputes.

In that regard Mr. President, we welcome your proposal for "the role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means," as the theme for the high-level debate at the opening of this Assembly.

### ***Cuba***

Mr. President, earlier, I spoke of the threats which plague mankind in the era of globalization. I also highlighted the need for multilateralism and the need for cooperation between and amongst states. These challenges can only be overcome in a global environment where there exists respect for each other's territorial integrity, non-interference in each other's domestic affairs, respect for sovereignty

and the right to self-determination. It is in this context that we again call on the United States of America, to discontinue its economic blockade against the people of the Republic of Cuba.

### ***Rebuilding Haiti***

Mr. President, I also welcome your support in keeping our sister island of Haiti on the global stage. There are few words left to describe the dire misery in which our brothers and sisters in Haiti are living. The paralysis of reconstruction and development activities has been the hallmark of the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated that country in January 2010.

We recognize the tremendous challenges in the reconstruction efforts and wish to thank those countries, institutions and individuals who have and continue to contribute towards this process. We again call on those who have made pledges to make good their commitments in order to accelerate the reconstruction efforts.

The presence of MINUSTAH remains critical to the reconstruction efforts in providing security and support to the people of Haiti. We therefore urge the United Nations Security Council to extend the tenure of MINUSTAH to facilitate the efforts of the new administration of His Excellency President Michel Martelly.

### ***Non-Communicable Diseases***

Mr. President, we all accept that it is critical to collectively address the impact of climate change, to resolve conflicts throughout the world, and to enhance peace and security for humanity. All these efforts, however, will be of little value to our peoples if we are not able to ensure that they are healthy. The UN has shown exemplary leadership in dealing with the fight against HIV/AIDS together with its partners. This same leadership must now be given to the fight against Non-Communicable Diseases, NCDs.

The frightening statistics of 2008 issued by the World Health Organization which estimated that thirty-six million global deaths were due to non-communicable diseases suggests that this phenomenon is not unique to any one region and therefore cannot be downplayed.

Mr. President, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) pose one of the greatest challenges to health and the development of Dominica, CARICOM and the rest of the world. The severe impacts of NCDs continue to place tremendous pressures on

our healthcare system, productivity, and our already over-burdened struggling economies.

It was for these reasons that the CARICOM Heads of Government made the Port of Spain Declaration in 2007 to promote healthy lifestyles and to combat NCDs in our region. Prior to, and since the declaration, the Dominican Government has adopted a National Policy on NCD's. We have further implemented a number of measures as part of our multi-sectoral efforts to include education, the strengthening of our primary healthcare system, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, greater access to treatment and free healthcare and appropriate legislative and policy changes. The Government of Dominica endorses the leadership taken by the Caribbean Community in this regard. We remain committed to the well being of every citizen.

Mr. President, we join our CARICOM colleagues in thanking the Member States and the Secretariat of the United Nations for the convening of a successful high-level meeting on NCDs. We look forward to the implementation of the Political Declaration and call on the developed countries to partner with us in our various initiatives to combat NCDs.

### ***Conclusion***

Mr. President, finally, Dominica wishes to reaffirm its confidence in the UN system as the ultimate negotiating and deliberating body for addressing major challenges confronting the world. You can count on Dominica's commitment to work in close collaboration with all the UN agencies, as well as respective Member States, to strengthen the mission of this outstanding body. Mr. President, we cannot over emphasize that notwithstanding its many limitations and imperfections, the United Nations System is critical to maintaining world peace and security and an international humanitarian system. The world today is a much better place because of the United Nations.

I thank the General Assembly.

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