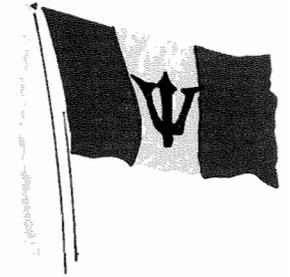




*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



STATEMENT BY

**SENATOR THE HON. MAXINE MCCLEAN
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
FOREIGN TRADE
BARBADOS**

TO THE

GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE

**SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

ON

OCTOBER 1, 2012

Mr. President,

On behalf of my delegation, I have the honour to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Barbados delegation during your Presidency. Let me also convey appreciation to your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for his able leadership of the 66th session.

Mr. President,

The theme of this year's General Debate, ***"Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means"***, underscores a core principle of the Charter of the United Nations. In the current global environment, where challenges to international peace and security are widespread, it is important to reaffirm the validity of this principle as one of the cornerstones on which our organisation is founded.

A small island developing state, Barbados is severely challenged by the global financial and economic crisis and the recession which has resulted from this. Moreover, Climate Change and other environmental challenges continue to pose

significant threats to the achievements of Barbados since its Independence in November 1966. As a relatively young nation, our independence was achieved by negotiation rather than by war. We have enjoyed the benefits of stability for over 370 years of unbroken Parliamentary Government. We are a peace-loving, democratic nation, extremely proud of our political and economic stability.

Our relatively peaceful situation does not mean that we are insulated or isolated from the prevailing global instability which is very evident today. Our political and social stability have facilitated the achievement of a standard of living which has led Barbados to be consistently ranked among the top 50 nations in the UNDP's Human Development Index.

Such status has been achieved as a result of the commitment of successive governments to invest heavily in our people, particularly in education, health and other social safety nets. A natural resource poor nation, we have placed priority on our greatest resource, our people.

A significant factor in our ability to overcome our constraints at the national level has been the tripartite social partnership comprising government, workers'

unions and employers. This partnership grew out of an economic crisis during the early 1990s and continues to function effectively today.

These strategies have been reinforced by our commitment to the observation of the rule of law. We are a principled country which firmly adheres to the core values enshrined in the UN Charter, including respect for the rule of the law, respect for human rights and the principle of sovereign equality.

Mr. President,

We have been classified as a middle income developing country. In reality we are a SIDS, characterised by high debt, high vulnerability to external shocks, and susceptibility to the impacts of Climate Change and natural disasters. The global economic and environmental situation has had a disproportionate effect on our successful, but nevertheless vulnerable economy. We bear the burden of rising food and fuel prices and a decline in foreign investment.

Our efforts to address these threats have been severely undermined by international financial and cooperation mechanisms which fail to take account of the vulnerability and capacity constraints that we face. Barbados and similar

vulnerable countries have been graduated from grant and concessionary financing by the multilateral institutions such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank, ignoring our unique situation.

There is clear need for greater equity, fairness and transparency in the process used to determine classifications and resource allocation. The persistent use of international classification and ratings systems which are solely based on GDP per capita and other narrow criteria must be expanded in scope to take into account meaningful variables such as vulnerability.

In this context, we welcome the assertion by the UN Secretary General that ***“the use of per capita income to classify countries as a means of guiding development cooperation disregards the nature and multidimensional nature of development”***.

Barbados endorses the need for the adoption of new indices and measures of development and applauds on-going work of bodies such as the Commonwealth and the UN Statistical Commission, to develop new indices.

Mr. President,

There is no greater threat to the survival, viability, and indeed the security, of my country and other Small Island Developing States, than the threat posed by climate change. Science continues to warn that we are on the threshold of irreversible and potentially catastrophic changes to the global climate system. Global emissions, the main cause of human induced climate change, are rising at their fastest rate in history, even as we bear witness to massive and accelerating ice loss from the ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica, and a doubling of the rate of sea level rise.

We are at a major turning point in the history of mankind. Are we willing to sacrifice the most vulnerable members of the international community? This is the stark choice we face. But after the islands disappear, who will be next? Inaction or inadequate action is inexcusable and morally indefensible, given the level of certainty of the scientific evidence before us, and the technological and financial tools at our disposal to effect the necessary change. While some useful progress was made at the Durban Climate Change Conference in December last year, we are not close to finding a solution to this problem.

Barbados welcomes the decision taken in Durban to launch negotiations on a new legally binding agreement that would take effect after 2020. However, for us a post-2020 agreement is meaningless if ambitious actions are not taken now to reduce global emissions and provide finance and technology to vulnerable developing countries. This is essential if we are to adapt to the ever worsening impacts of climate change. The upcoming Climate Change Conference in Doha must therefore prioritize the pre-2020 actions necessary to ensure that the world is on track in 2020 to meet the below 2 degree or 1.5 degree globally agreed goals. This will include:

1. Clarity from developed countries on the scale of climate finance after the end of the fast start finance period this year.
2. A greater sense of urgency and ambition in reducing global emissions before 2020 to minimize and avoid potentially catastrophic impacts of climate change.

Mr. President,

Barbados and other Small Island Developing States have thrown their full support behind the UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All Initiative. In May

this year, the Government of Barbados, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), hosted a High-Level Conference on ***“Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in SIDS – Challenges, Opportunities, Commitments”***. That meeting adopted the **“Barbados Declaration”** which outlines an ambitious and action-oriented agenda for achieving the goal of sustainable energy for all in SIDS.

As a concrete expression of our solid determination, some 22 SIDS agreed to inscribe, in an Annex to the Declaration, a spectrum of ambitious voluntary commitments to promote transformational activities in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy access and low carbon development.

I commend the Governments of Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom for pledging, in the Barbados Declaration, to support SIDS in the implementation of our ambitious commitments. We urge other development partners to join us on this journey to ensure our energy independence. For us, sustainable development is not possible without sustainable energy.

Mr. President,

Barbados shares the view of the UN Secretary-General that the Rio +20 Conference in Brazil this year accomplished a number of important milestones. In the words of the Prime Minister of Barbados, and I quote, ***“Rio +20 will be remembered as that unique moment in time when we decided not to yield to our fears, but rather, to transform this present period of global uncertainty and volatility into a major opportunity to set new agendas, which can then be developed more fully over the next few years”***. Barbados welcomes the agreement at Rio to convene the 3rd Global Conference on SIDS in 2014, some two decades after the convening of the 1st SIDS Conference in Barbados. The international community can be assured that Barbados will do its part to ensure the success of this Conference.

Mr. President,

During this session the Assembly will consider a resolution on the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea. Within the Caribbean we have recognized

that an integrated management approach that involves all relevant stakeholders provides us with the best option for protecting the Caribbean Sea, our most valuable shared resource. Barbados has led the regional effort in the Association of Caribbean States to create the Caribbean Sea Commission. The Commission represents an oceans governance framework to promote cooperation towards effective management of the Caribbean Sea area. Barbados calls on the international community to support this initiative including the designation by the General Assembly of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development.

Mr. President,

Citizen Security remains a major concern for Barbados. The CARICOM sub-region has become a major transit and destination point for the trafficking of illicit drugs and firearms. As a consequence, the incidence of crime and violence continues to escalate in the region, and thus threatens to reverse many of our economic and social gains. Developing countries like ours have been compelled to divert financial and other resources earmarked for social and economic development for use in combatting this transnational scourge.

The heavy toll that this takes on the populations of our region, brings in to sharp focus the importance of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It also emphasises the need for a strong, legally binding arms trade treaty, which sets the highest possible international standards for the transfer of conventional arms.

We share the profound disappointment of many Member States at the failure of the Conference on the ATT to reach agreement on a treaty text before its conclusion. Barbados cannot envisage such a treaty that does not include small arms and light weapons, their components as well ammunition. Barbados expects that despite the setback, negotiations on the ATT will resume during this session.

At the national level, we are appreciative of continuing cooperation with bilateral partners and regional and international bodies like UNODC. These include programmes aimed at preventing and reducing levels of violence and crime in our society. We look forward to the imminent reopening of the UNODC office for the Caribbean sub-region, which my Government has offered once again to host.

It is well recognised that peace, security and development are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. Barbados is therefore heartened that in dealing with conflict prevention, the United Nations has moved beyond traditional preventive diplomacy. We support the pursuit of comprehensive strategies that address deep-rooted structural causes of conflict, poverty-eradication and development, human rights and the rule of law, elections and the building of democratic institutions.

As a family of nations we continue to strive for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Success has been mixed, and made more difficult by the current global financial crisis. The target implementation date of 2015, looms large, and we share international concerns that the MDGs may become casualties of the current environment. As we articulate the post-2015 development agenda, we must not lose sight of the urgency of fulfilling these goals.

Mr. President,

Let me reiterate my country's commitment to the rule of law and our unwavering commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. I take this opportunity to speak out against the continued unilateral imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States. Barbados joins the overwhelming majority of UN Member States in opposing this action which has persisted too long. This situation merits immediate resolution if the unnecessary hardship and suffering it has wrought on the Cuban people is to end. We therefore encourage constructive engagement between the two sides.

Mr. President,

Strong functioning democracies are the foundation on which international peace, security, and prosperity are built. As a democratic state with a longstanding and firm commitment to effective multilateralism, Barbados reiterates the crucial nexus between development, peace, security and human rights.

The UN is the only global body with the unquestionable legitimacy to lead a global response to the challenges facing humanity. Recognizing this, Barbados remains steadfast in its commitment to the UN and all it stands for.

I thank you.