



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

STATEMENT

BY

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PRIME MINISTER OF THE FEDERATION OF ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE 67th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Thank you Mr. President.
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I greet you on behalf of the Government and People of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. President,

It is an honor to address this august body, and on behalf of the Government and people of St. Kitts & Nevis I extend to you sincere congratulations on your election to the Presidency of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your task, we know, will be far from easy in light of the wide range of taxing issues that will be brought before you. As you embark on your tenure it is our hope that under your astute leadership the myriad issues that define the work of this Assembly will continue to find relevance for all of us.

It is imperative, therefore, Mr. President, that the mobilization of commitments required to advance the agenda of this 67th Session must begin now. We are aware that the challenges associated with this task are demanding and will indeed require our focused attention, strong partnership and visionary leadership, if we are to make significant strides in an era, embattled by a plethora of issues that threaten the realization of our various developmental goals. We have no doubt that you will provide the degree of attention that they so urgently deserve.

I must also, at this point, on behalf of my delegation, thank Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the 66th General Assembly, for so ably presiding over the work of this body during the past year.

Mr. President, Our focus this year is to continue to steadfastly promote an environment of peace and security as these are the critical requirements for sustainable development for our

people. As the geographic distance that divides us shrink into insignificance and become increasingly reduced by our interdependence and partnership, it is equally significant that we strive for effective and lasting settlement of disputes. Libya and Syria, of course, are just two of the many cases that come to mind, with the myriad and multifaceted question that they raise not only regarding the advisability of intervention, but also with reference to such issues as the timing of any intervention, the form of any intervention, and, of course, the associated humanitarian and relief-related consequences of any such intervention. The complexity of these challenges, Mr. President, demand a sober redoubling of our efforts, and underscores the fact that social upheaval and human trauma anywhere must indeed concern us all.

The Security Council must continue to ensure that it executes its mandate to enable the institutionalization of a culture of peace and security. Respect for democracy and the democratic principles espoused by the United Nations, must inform the thrust of our engagement as we reject intolerance for diversity and peaceful co-existence for all people. I use this opportunity to condemn the recent, senseless attack on the Embassy of the United States of America in Libya, resulting in loss of innocent lives. This must be condemned from the highest level.

St. Kitts and Nevis, gratefully, is a stable, socially cohesive nation. And on behalf of my Government, I must take the time, here, to express our deep appreciation to the United States of America for the highly valued support, in the form of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, offered to both my country as well as our region, in our fight against drugs and criminality. This also addresses the issue of reform that is required to ensure that our youth embrace renewed alternatives to lives of unproductivity and look towards a new hope for peace and prosperity through respect for human life. This is of great importance to us. In spite of this, however, the continuing flow of foreign-made small arms into our Caribbean region concerns us greatly. Again, originating beyond our shores, these weapons have dire consequences both in terms of human life as well as the economic stability of our nations.

We are aware that changing cultural values are influencing the use of weapons by some in our nations, yes. And we understand the importance of focused and effective policing and partnership on matters of security. Related to this, we urge the international community to see as

an absolute priority the production of a much-needed and long-overdue Arms Trade Treaty. The interests of democratic nations everywhere cry out for the establishment of international standards and controls governing the illicit flow of conventional weapons, and I urge the establishment of a dedicated secretariat to assist State Parties in this regard.

Mr. President, how can small Caribbean nations be expected to deal – singlehandedly - with the double misfortune of being located between regions of massive drug production and regions of massive drug consumption? Small arms and light weapons always follow illegal drugs, and we in the Caribbean are simply not equipped to deal with the externally created crime fallout. And on that point, I wish to stress that before its closure, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime provided critical hands-on collaboration in this high-priority area of crime fighting. With its presence now having been withdrawn, the vital support that we need simply is not there, leaving us to adjust as best we can - at precisely the time when drug and deportee-related crime, continue to be a major hemispheric challenge .

Mr. President,

While we focus on the well being of our people, my Government has strengthened its primary health care with increased attention on reducing the prevalence of non-communicable diseases and has updated an implementable Plan of Action that addresses the priorities in keeping with the political Declaration on NCDs. As part of our national sensitization mechanism on health related issues, we are institutionalizing a culture of Wellness with emphasis on healthy lifestyles. Similar responses have been initiated at the regional level as we encourage Member States to participate effectively in the multilateral institutions to voice our positions on the issue of NCDs. That is why the Caribbean Community has taken the lead on this matter in recent years, with the with the UN High Level Meeting on NCDs. In light of the clear nexus between healthy workforces and a nation's economic potential, therefore, I urge that this body now move forward to launch a UN Campaign to curb the global toll of NCD's as we move towards the realization of our Millennium Development Goals. At the time of last year's High Level Meeting on NCDs, there was a commitment both to ensure that this grave issue remains high on the development agenda, as well as to ensure concrete action in this regard. Hence, the type of global effort previously recommended would constitute precisely the type of concrete action to which we committed ourselves one year ago.

Any discussion of health, Mr. President, must address the issue of HIV/AIDS, and because our ultimate objective must be the complete eradication of this dreaded disease - as opposed to the lifelong management and accommodation of same by millions of people around the globe - I appeal for a wise, determined, and discerning onslaught against this scourge at the local, national, and international levels, by us all. Here and now we must recommit ourselves to eradicate the stigmatization and discrimination against people living with and associated with HIV/AIDS. The abuses of human lives that perpetuate discrimination and stigmatization must come to an end. We in the Caribbean are committed to achieving this.

Mr. President,

I wish, now, to address a matter that is profoundly troubling to Small Island States like mine. Whatever the debate being waged internationally regarding the question of climate change; however dramatic the rhetorical jousting within various circles on this issue, we, in the Caribbean, can attest to the radical climatic shifts that our region has undergone in recent decades. Moreover it is troubling that the largest contributors of greenhouse gases are still not taking responsibility for the increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, coastal degradation, coral reef bleaching and decimation, infrastructural damage, and loss of lives that their actions have wrought. Our people, our maritime integrity, our soils, and our infrastructure are all interrelated contributors to our overall social and economic viability, and the absence of corrective and restitutive action on the part of industrialized nations involved is neither constructive nor understandable in this highly interdependent world. The physical, mental and financial burden that other countries' energy usage has inflicted on countries like mine has been enormous – plunging us deeper into debt, and severely frustrating our efforts to meet our Millennium Development Goals. While a shift to renewable energy will not instantly solve the myriad problems caused by a significantly fossil-fuel based global economy, the embrace of green energy will indeed help to halt the intense downward spiral into which our fossil-fuel based economies have thrust our planet, and so we strongly urge that green energy be made an absolute priority globally. I must commend the Secretary General for his visionary leadership and the Governments and financial institutions that have committed generously to ensure that high impact clean energy is utilized globally. Mr. President, my Government wishes to place on

record its appreciation to the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and other development partners for their valuable assistance to my country in the area of renewable energy which will positively impact our energy cost reduction efforts, as we move towards realizing a full green economy to bring much needed financial relief to our people by 2015.

Mr. President,

The recently held United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development set the stage for a reconfiguration of the global program on sustainable development, and indeed, signaled a new era in the sustainable development agenda of the international community. Two decades of debate and deliberation were instrumental in our being able to frame the dialogue, and envision a path for the two decades now before us. If we are to even approach the potential at Rio+20, it will be essential that we first face up to, and then break, the strictures of indifference and narrow self-interest that have plagued us for far too long. It is therefore incumbent upon us and future generations that we view our responsibilities as parts of an ongoing continuum – with each of our efforts benefitting from, as well as building upon, the work that came before.

And so, St. Kitts & Nevis applauds the decision to convene the Third UN Conference on Sustainable Development for Small Island Developing States in 2014. Small Island Developing States, by virtue of our size and geographic profile, are clearly among the world's most vulnerable nations – hence the recognition of our need for special attention where sustainable development is concerned, and, indeed, hence the importance of everyone remembering the absolutely essential nature of special and differentiated responsibilities where small island states are concerned. I therefore urge that clear targets be established now, so that we can all prepare thoroughly and well for the 2014. Conference, in which urgently needed attention will be paid to ways in which our vulnerabilities, as Small Developing Island States, might best be reduced. This august body can be assured of our full participation in this process, and in the post-Rio+20 sustainable development agenda.

Permit me to point out, however, Mr. President the extent to which the best laid plans by countries like mine are repeatedly up-ended by decisions made in nations far beyond our shores. I have mentioned the impact of externally generated CO2 emissions on our economic prospects.

And I have also discussed the severe national security threat being posed to our region by the foreign-made small arms and weapons that have been finding their way into our nations. Particularly trying as well, Mr. President, and indeed, troublingly destabilizing for many countries throughout the region – and indeed the world at large– has been the global economic crisis that made itself manifest in 2008 , the ramifications of which have been trying and testing regional economic planners – to the limit - ever since. In no way of our making, the global economic crisis has severely complicated the task of governance in highly indebted middle income nations like mine. It has introduced both new variables and additional unknowns in our economic planning models and has, in a nutshell, thrust upon us a backdrop of global volatility that none of us could have anticipated, and which none of us welcome , which has created immense difficulties for our people.

Indeed, St. Kitts and Nevis was forced to pursue a new economic development programme, involving fiscal balance and debt restructuring, with built in social safety nets. The assistance of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Union and our many local, regional and international creditors, including the United Kingdom and the United States, of the Paris Club, have helped us to alleviate the severity of the social impact of the economic adjustment.

But we continue to face significant challenges especially in relation to the attainment of economic growth in the context of a very sluggish and uncertain global economy. The mammoth challenges and difficulties that our small island state faces underscore the need for greater attention paid to the issue of special and differentiated responsibilities in this rather trying era. And, indeed, it underscores the need for small, responsible nations like mine, in our relations with far larger and infinitely more powerful friends and allies to, nonetheless, have fair and calm paths to redress.

A few days ago, Mr. President, in this very Assembly, the nations of the world held a High Level Meeting on the Rule of Law. While there is often debate as to the exact meaning of “the rule of law”, my Delegation and the people we represent are happy to align ourselves with the core principle on the Rule of Law as distilled by Lord Justice Bingham, formerly of the

House of Lords and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. In his book entitled the Rule of Law, he stated, and I quote “the Core of the existing principle ... is that persons and authorities within the state, whether public or private should be bound and entitled to the benefit of laws publicly made, taking effect (generally) in the future and publicly administered in our Courts” end of quote. Though not comprehensive, this, in my country’s view, represents a solid basis from which to identify the essential elements of a continually evolving concept, an essential mechanism for conflict resolution, respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of our people. I support the call of the Secretary General for a comprehensive approach for strengthening the rule of law at the international and domestic levels.

I make this point, Mr. President, because over our almost thirty years of nationhood, St. Kitts and Nevis has studiously examined both trends here at the UN as well as developments throughout the international community, as we have evaluated our place in the world. Throughout, we have been faithfully guided by our belief in the rule of law. We believe that in the international arena, the rule of law was created to protect the vulnerable, and to remind us of obligations to our fellow man, and we further believe that orderly and constructive co-existence requires not only citizens, but indeed nations as well, to be bound by the Rule of Law. Respect for international law has always, then, for our nation, been our guiding force. And my delegation calls on all member states of this great body to similarly respect this most sacred pillar of international co-existence.

Mr. President, throughout the twenty-nine years of our existence, the Republic of China on Taiwan has been a highly valued partner and ally. And throughout my nation, evidence of our collaborative efforts abound in areas as diverse as agriculture, agro-tourism, green energy, information technology, community development, and education – to name just a few. In my own nation – or even my region – however, Taiwan’s unfailing and valued contributions to the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the World Health Assembly, and others have long reflected their outstanding credentials as a valued and impactful member of the global community. It is only fitting and just that all remaining strictures pertaining to Taiwan’s standing among the

international community of nations be removed. And St. Kitts-Nevis appeals to this body to ensure that this will, indeed, be done.

I wish to stress here, Mr. President, how unfortunate it is that, yet again, the case has to be made for the lifting of the Cuban Embargo. This embargo is not, as some may wish to suggest, a matter of merely bilateral import. Not only have we repeatedly heard Cuba oppose its existence in this very body, but we also know that the embargo's continued denial of certain medical treatments to the Cuban people is simply unconscionable. Cuba and its people have made considerable contributions to international medicine and higher education, and the Caribbean has been amongst its most sustained beneficiaries. It is therefore with utmost conviction, and the clearest possible resolve, that St. Kitts-Nevis calls for the immediate end to the Cuban embargo.

Mr. President, in July and August of this year, the international community participated in the games of the 30th Olympiad. At a time of rising international tensions and intensifying antagonisms, the time has probably come for us to introduce to other areas of inter- and intra-national realms of interaction, the keen spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that has enabled the Olympics to function so constructively and so well, for so very many years.

The international community is, by definition, diverse, Mr. President. Throughout this community, however, there run strong seams of commonality that both can, and must, be better utilized in order to promote the constructive airing of differences, the avoidance of violent conflict, and peace. And most importantly, when all else fails, we can and must settle the most vexing of international crises through the good offices of this institution.

This is the path that would serve all of our best interests.

And so I sincerely urge that we take it.

I thank you.

