



VANUATU

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

800 2ND AVENUE, SUITE 400B, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017

TEL: (212) 661 – 4303 FAX (212) 661 – 5544

E-MAIL: vanumis@aol.com



(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MELTEK SATO KILMAN LIVTUVANU

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

BEFORE

THE SIXTY SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

FRIDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2012

“RESOLVING INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES BY PEACEFUL MEANS”

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Vanuatu is very pleased that we are meeting under your Presidency and therefore wishes to associate itself with other esteemed delegations in congratulating you and the members of your Bureau on your election to lead us through this 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

I am indeed profoundly delighted that you have given us much assurance in our meeting this week that under your abled leadership you will do your utmost to assist and bring to the forefront issues that are confronting the Pacific island states and the marginalized. We trust that with your guidance, this session would conclude with successful outcomes.

Allow me also to pay tribute to your predecessor, H.E. Mr.Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, who with strong leadership and diplomatic finesse has led us to achieving great outcomes during the 66thSession of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. President,

Our world has seen unprecedented disputes and conflicts, most of which have spanned through successive generations. Hence the 67th Session's theme, "*Resolving international disputes by peaceful means*", should draw our focus to finding lasting solutions to the numerous ongoing conflicts in various parts of the world, which are causing vulnerable people to suffer.

You have the solemn responsibility to steer this multilateral gathering towards contemplating deeper on the very foundation of this Organization to encourage and create a more secure and peaceful world in which diverse cultures and civilizations could coexist without having to resort to force and violence to achieve their goals.

Mr. President,

This podium can testify to all the speeches delivered by the world's great leaders on a vast array of issues affecting humanity. For many of us who are present here as politically independent nations, we share the journey and the litany of heartaches and ushered dreams of many of our global citizens whose human rights to larger political and civil freedom are still bound by tentacles of imperialism and colonial legacy. Still today, for the remaining colonized territories, this platform represents a pinnacle where they so greatly aspire to reach one day.

Since 1980, the Republic of Vanuatu has repeatedly called for the UN to strengthen its efforts in working towards full decolonization of territories which are still under the control of administrative powers. I call on the independent and free nations of the world to complete the story of decolonization and close this chapter. At this juncture, I urge the United Nations not to reject the demands for French Polynesia's right to self-determination and progress.

In the same manner, negotiations for self-government of the indigenous people of New Caledonia must continue. We encourage the parties to ensure that the process to achieve self-government must be on track.

Mr. President,

It is at this juncture, that I call upon the members of the United Nations to ensure that collective actions must be taken to lift the embargo on Cuba. We the members of the United Nations must revitalize our political motivation and courage and dispel the feelings of animosity and ensure that the UN resolutions on this subject are fully implemented. Our actions must not detract from the universal values of love and respect to people no matter how insignificant they may be to the powerful nations. I hope that one day we will be able to echo the message of freedom at last to many of our friends who still suffer from the burden of conflicting ideologies.

Mr. President

Last year, I reiterated to this eminent UN Assembly, our serious concerns over the denial of the right for a country to exercise its full political freedom and inherent cultural rights over its maritime territories.

The territorial dispute over the southern two islands of Vanuatu, Mathew (Umaenupne) and Hunter (Leka) islands, with the French Republic since our independence 32 years ago is a reminder that we must continue to uphold the notion that the rule of law should not be used as an instrument of powerful nations to coerce weak and small nations especially over territorial disputes.

The French and the Vanuatu Governments met in Paris this April to commence dialogue on the issue of the territorial disputed islands. We take this opportunity to thank the French Government for finally opening its door to commencing dialogue and negotiation in an attempt to resolve this long outstanding international dispute. It is at this point that we acknowledge the procedures outlined within the UN to ensure that such disputes are amicably resolved.

Mr. President,

Vanuatu, as a Small Island State surrounded by the vast Pacific Ocean, is exposed to notorious and illegal trans-shipment and trade of illicit arms. International arms trade has continuously lacked proper and coherent regulation and is responsible for the lives of an innumerable amount of people in the past.

Like many other countries, we call on the United Nations to take a much more rigid approach in expediting the conclusion of an Arms Trade Treaty which would provide greater security and control on such illegal activity. This is an issue, which is of paramount importance to all countries exposed to the illegal Trade of Arms and Light Weapons.

Mr. President,

My country has consistently argued, that the mechanisms and criteria for assessing graduation eligibility must not be isolated from the permanent and inherent vulnerabilities of our countries. It is unrealistic for the UN agencies to look at the progress and make projections without taking into consideration issues of permanent vulnerabilities and capacity to sustain growth in our countries after graduation. I wish to further state that following the findings from the World Risk Report 2011, Vanuatu scored highest on the World Risk Index, as the "*country with the greatest disaster risk, due to its high exposure and weak coping capacities*". The findings of this report are critical, and we therefore ask that the UN Committee on Development Policy must carefully weigh these arguments and reassess the vulnerability graduation criteria.

I would like to also state that prior to another Triennial Review of the Least Developed Country category the UN will need to ensure that proper UN General Assembly Resolutions are adopted to ensure that Smaller Island States graduating from LDC continue to enjoy certain preferential treatment, even after graduation to offset the vulnerability factor. Mr. Chairman, let me take this opportunity to invite the members of the Triennial Review, to visit my country to establish firsthand information and ascertain the findings of the World Risk Report prior to escalating the process of graduation in 2013.

Mr. President,

Our own experience has shown that the different ways the multilateral organizations and institutions are categorizing member countries can affect the flow of development assistance. For instance, Vanuatu was selected several years ago out of the Pacific Island Countries to benefit from the Millennium Challenge Corporation funding of the Government of the United States of America together with 15 other countries. At the time of our selection, Vanuatu was graded as a Low Income Country and by the eligibility criteria of the MCC, Vanuatu automatically qualified and benefited from a USD66 million to build two major national roads in two different islands in the country. I wish to express our appreciation to the United States Government for this assistance.

However, when the *Report on Countries that are Candidates for Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Account Eligibility for Fiscal Year 2010* was released, Vanuatu failed to qualify. The reason was simply because the MCC was using the World Bank criteria and graduated Vanuatu from a Low Income Country to a Low Middle Income Country which means that the criteria may be totally different from the LDC criteria defined by the United Nations.

I therefore wish to call on the UN, especially the ECOSOC, to ensure that the LDC definition and criteria used by the UN agencies are compatible with that of the international financial institutions.

Mr. President,

The vast Pacific Ocean is our heritage and it is the prime means of livelihood of the people living in countries therein. Like other Pacific Island countries, Vanuatu continues to be exposed to, and threatened by, the negative impacts of climate change, such as coastal erosion, coral bleaching and ocean acidification. At the 43rd Pacific Island Forum in the Cook Islands, the Forum leaders noted that many challenges remain in realizing benefits from the pledged 'new and additional' targets of the Copenhagen Accord.

In that respect, I would like to seize this opportunity to express our wish to see the UN's assistance in facilitating effective responses to global climate change, particularly through the prompt implementation of adaptation measures, as well as mitigation efforts, climate change financing, capacity building, and international negotiations.

Mr. President,

While we tend to direct our main focus of attention towards global climate change, we must address other matters, such as environmental pollution with the same exigency and rigor. The potential for permanent, irrevocable damage of the environment by Marine Pollution has been constantly highlighted by the scientific community and should not be tolerated. The future growth of international maritime traffic will further exacerbate this situation.

Hence, Vanuatu urges all remaining states that have not yet done so, to expeditiously sign and ratify the 1972 'London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter' as well as the 1996 Protocol thereto, and to promulgate and enforce legal regimes, both in the domestic and international arenas.

At this point, I would like to reiterate the unnecessary risk to which we expose our children and ourselves by not taking a firm precautionary approach with regards to marine geo-engineering practices such as Sub-Seabed Carbon Sequestration and Ocean Fertilization.

In our global efforts to combat Climate Change, the strict promotion and adherence to only those responses that are environmentally sensible is our crucial responsibility, and I am not only speaking on behalf of a small island nation when I remind you that by forgetting the essentiality of the oceans as the very foundation of life on earth, one neglects a vital guarantor of mankind's future survival.

Excellencies,

As I conclude this speech, I have to make a last appeal to all assembled leaders. I urge you to take immediate action upon return to your home countries and initiate the change that needs to come about if we wish to preserve a planet capable of providing our sons and daughters with a bright future. Leaders of the industrialized countries, if we want to achieve the proposed 1.5 °C target, we have less than eight years left to close a vast mitigation gap. Who, if not you, can or will implement the required measures for this crucial change? This may well be your last chance. In your hands lie hope and destination of the world's nations. It is not only a responsibility that you have to assume for your own people but one for humanity as a whole.

Mr. President,

I wish to thank you once again for the opportunity to express my views in this august forum. Long live our aspirations to create a better and a more secure world for everyone. May God bless the United Nations.