

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

**New York, October 1, 2012**

Please check against delivery

Mr. President  
Secretary-General  
Distinguished Delegates  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government and People of the Commonwealth of Dominica, I would like to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the 67th Session of United Nations General Assembly and wish you every success. We also express appreciation and gratitude to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, for the able manner with which he presided over the Sixty-Sixth Session.

Mr. President,  
We are convening this 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly at a time when we are faced with a myriad of challenges – the impact of climate change, civil conflicts, hunger and starvation, poverty, HIV/AIDS and Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases. These challenges however, are equally matched with the tremendous opportunities created by the rapid advancements in science and technology and the unprecedented level of international cooperation. What we need therefore, is the political will to harness these opportunities for the benefit of our peoples. This, would, of necessity, require the transformation of multilateral institutions like the United Nations - its organs and agencies, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, to reflect equity, and inclusion. These changes must be supported by a shift in our systems of production and consumption, in a new economic system that is built on the principles of fairness and differentiated treatment based on the unique challenges of countries, especially on the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States. I am confident that with this approach, in a functioning multilateral system, we will be able to overcome these challenges.

### **Sustainable Development**

Mr. President,  
The unsustainable consumption and production systems that continue to deplete the world's resources and simultaneously contribute to global warming, remains a major threat to the survival of those of us who live close to the world's oceans. The Rio +20 Conference on Sustainable Development was a commendable effort by the international community to

take stock of the human impact on the earth's resources and to commit to reversing the present trend. The outcome document: "The Future We Want," falls short of our expectations. However, it remains a work in progress and presents a useful platform for continued discussions for multilateral resolutions to the growing concern of sustainable development. Yet more importantly, The Outcome Document is indicative of what the international community can achieve when collective energies are harnessed to present an international response.

Mr. President,

The Commonwealth of Dominica is pleased that Rio +20 reaffirmed an international commitment to support Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We especially welcome the agreement to convene the Third International Conference for the Sustainable Development of SIDS in 2014 in the Pacific. In fact, we are of the view that the Third SIDS Conference will provide an opportunity for the implementation of the outcomes of Rio +20 the Barbados Program of Action (BPoA) and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation

As a small island developing state, Dominica is committed to the foundational principle of environmental sustainability. This is clearly demonstrated by our Nature Island approach to sustainable development. The sustainable use of our natural resources have contributed to our tourism product while at the same time, blessing our citizens with the most beautiful place on earth to call home. Notwithstanding, our many vulnerabilities continue to place us at the mercies of those countries that promote and employ unsustainable practices. This includes an international economic system dominated by the strong and powerful that pay little or no regard to the vulnerable. If multilateralism is to survive, we need to focus on correcting this lopsided system that is destined to annihilate SIDS.

### **Climate Change**

Mr. President,

The very vulnerability of Dominica to the effects of global warming underscores our commitment to a multilateral approach aimed at combating climate change. The impact of climate change continues to manifest itself in a number of ways resulting in greater challenges to the survival of SIDS. The failure to date to reach a legally binding outcome on climate change is cause of grave concern. While the debate continues, the challenges to our islands are becoming greater. We are encouraged, however, that the recently

concluded climate talks in Bangkok has “prepared a fertile ground” for the Doha Talks later this year. Nevertheless, Dominica continues to stress the importance of extending and amending the Kyoto Protocol, before it lapses. The timely creation of a roadmap for a new legally binding document must be treated as a matter of urgency. We look forward to the Doha Talks with great expectations.

### **Renewable Energy**

Mr. President,

One of the major contributors to climate change is the consumption of fossil fuel for the production of electricity. The importation of fossil fuel also has the greatest impact on the economic vulnerability for many Small Island Developing States. Energy, therefore, is central to responding to the challenges of climate change and sustainable development. Today, there is still a significant portion of many remote and rural island communities with little or no access to modern and affordable energy services.

Low-carbon economies in SIDS, therefore, provide an opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emission while decrease dependence on imported fossil fuel. By generating their own energy from natural renewable sources, SIDS will be able to achieve energy security. The savings realized from the avoided cost of importing fossil fuel, could be used for adaption and developmental needs. It is for this and other reasons that SIDS DOCK was instituted. SIDS DOC is currently providing a global platform for SIDS to pursue their renewable enegy ambitions by building capacity and providing technical support to member states. The Governments of Denmark and Japan, the UNDP and the World Bank, continue to play a significant role in making energy independence a reality for SIDS. The recent partnership with the Clinton Foundation has given new hope to a number of islands that are vigorously pursuing their renewable energy aspirations.

Dominica has the honour of serving as Chair of the SIDS DOCK, and in this regard, my Delegation as well as the SIDS DOCK institution fully endorses the Barbados Declaration on Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in Small Island Developing States, signed by AOSIS Ministers and other Heads of Delegation at the Ministerial Conference in Bridgetown, Barbados, last May. The commitments made and targets set to increase the percentage of renewable energy and increase energy efficiency in their energy portfolios, is a testimony of our Region’s commitment to the Secretary-General’s

“Sustainable Energy for All” initiative. We congratulate the Secretary-General for launching the SEFA, which the SIDS DOCK has joined and is committed to actively supporting.

Mr. President,

Dominica, The Nature Island, continues to pursue the development of its geothermal resources. We are pleased to announce that the recently concluded test-drilling in the Roseau Valley has confirmed that our geothermal resources have the potential to supply domestic needs as well as for export. This will allow us to move away from the importation of fossil fuel for the generation of electricity within the next five years, while also reducing the cost of electricity to our people. At the same time, the development of a power plant for export to the French Territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique will provide a source of revenue for the island. Negotiations are ongoing and are expected to conclude by the end of 2012. Work is expected to commence on the first power plant in the first quarter of 2013.

Mr. President,

Dominica’s energy initiative has the potential to transform its economy and to improve the quality of life of its people. The Government of Dominica, therefore, as trustee of the island’s resources on behalf of its people, is ensuring that it manages this process responsibly. We have sought and are receiving assistance from some of the most reputable consultants in the world. The support of the Clinton Climate Initiative has allowed us to navigate through the complex challenges of this project. We wish to express our gratitude to President Bill Clinton for his continued support.

We anticipate that by 2017 all of our electricity needs will be met by a combination of sources: hydro and geothermal. By 2020 we will expect to be exporting electricity to our neighbouring islands via submarine cables. This, coupled with our sustainable development practices, means that Dominica will, not only be carbon neutral, but carbon negative by 2020.

Like Dominica, many SIDS are pursuing national renewable energy initiatives, and more than 20 SIDS have made pledges under the SEFA. However, unsustainable debt burdens and the lack of technology make it impossible for them to achieve their goals. We therefore invite other developed countries and international institutions to join the Governments of Denmark and Japan, and the Clinton Climate Initiative in the SIDS DOCK

Partnership, and the Government of Norway in its Energy for All initiative, in providing the critical support to SIDS.

### **Global Peace and Security**

Mr. President,

The prolonged and in some cases the recent cries of peoples around the world should be heeded by the global community. It should not be done in a selective manner based on narrow national interests. Injustice anywhere and in any form should not be tolerated. The so-called “Arab Spring” has been one such expression. The international community must therefore, support the wishes of the people as they struggle to create their own democratic systems driven by their aspirations. The recent spate of attacks on the United States Missions and personnel or that of any other country, does nothing to advance the causes of those who may be marginalized and in some cases those who feel offended by other democratic systems. Regardless of what may have led to these protests, the Commonwealth of Dominica condemns these unjustified attacks which resulted in the unfortunate loss of life of the US Ambassador Christopher Stevens and his colleagues.

While we are heartened with the attention that has been given to the recent outcries from some corners of the globe, we remain concerned that in other jurisdictions the cries of people who have been suffering for decades are not being received with the same enthusiasm. The suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Haiti is allowed to linger much to the concern of Dominica and the CARICOM. We are grateful to those countries that have responded and others who have and continue to support the rebuilding efforts in Haiti. However, we are still far from taking the people of Haiti to a state of normalcy where they can enjoy the basic necessities of life.

Our Caribbean region also continues to witness the unheeded call for the discontinuation of the economic, financial and trade embargo on our brothers and sisters in the Republic of Cuba. We call on the government of the United States to allow the people of Cuba to be fully integrated into the global trading system so as to improve their lives and to allow the world to benefit from their tremendous contributions especially in science and technology.

## **Arms Trade Treaty**

Mr. President,

The international trade, transfer and use of conventional arms, weapons, munitions and ammunition continue to threaten international peace and security. Dominica, like her sister nations in CARICOM, is not immune to this debilitating phenomenon. Our region continues to be affected by an increase in gangs and violent criminal activities born out of the trade and transfer of illicit arms and drugs throughout the Caribbean region from North to South America.

Dominica is therefore disturbed that despite four weeks of rigorous deliberations and intense negotiations, the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, ("the UNCATT"), did not result in the finalization of the treaty. However, like the rest of our CARICOM colleagues we believe that the July 26 text from the Chairman of UNCATT provides a blueprint for a possible final document. As leaders, the task is now ours to finalize a legally binding document in the interest and protection of our people. Dominica is optimistic that this can be achieved during this Session of the General Assembly and reaffirms its commitment to the realization of a robust Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. President,

Dominica takes this opportunity to applaud the United Nation's role and efforts in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the global community. Long-term socio-economic development of many nations particularly SIDS such as Dominica is severely compromised because of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in our region.

Associated with this illicit trade, is the trafficking of narcotics through the Caribbean region from South to North America, which has presented new challenges to the maintenance of peace and security in our region. This underscores the urgent need for a legally binding international instrument addressing the control and monitoring of the illicit trade in small arms between states and among non-state actors.

## **Conclusion**

Mr. President,

Dominica remains committed to collaborating with the United Nations and all its agencies, as well as Member States, to strengthen the Mission of this noble body that, notwithstanding its imperfections, is critical to maintaining

world peace and security. We affirm our confidence in the UN system as the ultimate negotiating and deliberating body for addressing major challenges confronting the world. May we all rise to the occasion and resolve to bring peace, security and prosperity to every corner of the globe. Our people depend on us.

I thank the General Assembly.