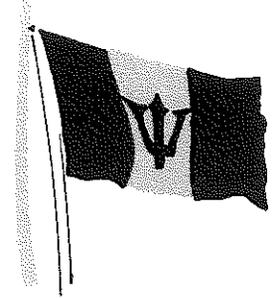




*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



DRAFT

STATEMENT BY

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

**DURING
THE GENERAL DEBATE**

OF THE

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

ON

SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

Mr. President,

It is my distinct honour and pleasure to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. CARICOM Heads of Government, at their 34th Meeting in July, pledged their support for your Presidency. Allow me therefore to assure you of my Delegation's support throughout your upcoming General Assembly. Let me also commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremic, for ably guiding the work of the General Assembly during its 67th Session.

You assume leadership of the General Assembly at a very pivotal moment in the UN timetable.

- The expiration deadline of the Millennium Development Goals is near and our efforts to elaborate an agenda for the Post-2015 period intensify.
- Post Rio+20 modification has been made to the institutional framework for sustainable development. An agreement has been reached on the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum and the United Nations Environment Assembly.
- The deliberations on the reform of the Economic and Social Council have been completed.
- It is envisaged that the deliberations of the Open-Ended Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals and the Inter-Governmental Committee on Financing Sustainable Development will accelerate in the next few months.
- The international community continues to chart a course in the pursuit of global sustainable development.
-

Current State of Play: Locating the UNGA in Its Global Context

Mr. President,

The theme of the 68th session of the UNGA “*Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage*”, will require that we engage in what might best be described as a retrospective and prospective dialogue. Much has been said about the current global financial and economic crisis, one made worse by the many manifestations of the impact of climate change: extreme weather events, food crises, and volatile food crises, compounded by the unprecedented levels of terror and violence. At the same time we have seen a global determination to tackle these issues.

Barbados recognises that the stability, health and productivity of the global environment, particularly coastal and marine resources, are fundamental to the survival of Barbados, CARICOM and other Small Island Developing States. We therefore deem it imperative that countries like ours maintain active involvement in shaping the global development policy agenda. It is recognised however, that SIDS are constrained in their ability and capacity to craft independent solutions. One major barrier is our debt situation.

The issue of debt sustainability is of particular relevance to Small Island Developing States (SIDS). In highlighting its importance, the Prime Minister of Barbados, in his feature address to the recently concluded Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS noted and I quote:

“Debt Sustainability is a critical issue not only for Barbados, but for many of the SIDS... We must therefore use the opportunity provided by the Third International Conference on SIDS to both find and share solutions to this challenge, as it is a

major constraint to SIDS achieving sustainable development. In this context it is imperative that before we meet in Samoa an opportunity be provided to fully ventilate this matter. In this regard, the relevant entity in the UN responsible for coordinating SIDS issues may want to consider convening a meeting of the Finance and Economic Ministers of SIDS to discuss this issue and to put forward specific recommendations to be considered as part of the outcome of the Third International meeting on SIDS”

I repeat this call to this august body, and commend it to the relevant entity of the United Nations System to act expeditiously on this proposal.

The Financial Services Sector

Mr. President,

Another issue of concern to Barbados relates to the international financial service sector. We believe that the sustainability of our development is being stymied by efforts to undermine this very important sector, which continues to provide stable and substantial contribution to our GDP. Barbados therefore associates itself with the comments of the Right Honourable Perry Christie, Prime Minister of The Bahamas, in his address to the General Assembly. We are a well regulated jurisdiction which has sought at all times to comply with international rules and best practice, and it is our intention to operate within the established international norms which have guided this sector to date.

Sustainable Development of SIDS

In 1994 Barbados was honoured to host the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. At that time we were optimistic that the international community's recognition of the inherent vulnerabilities of small states would lead to real progress in the development of SIDS. However, the five year review of the Mauritius Strategy in 2010 revealed that *“small island developing states have made less progress than most other groupings, or even regressed in economic terms, especially in terms of poverty reduction and debt sustainability”*. Despite this, Barbados remains committed to the process to advance the sustainable development of SIDS.

As you are aware, Mr. President, Barbados attaches great importance to sustainable development in all its dimensions. We believe that the theme for this year's Session *“The Post 2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage”* is both timely and important. Such an Agenda must recognise the importance of addressing the very specific needs of the members of the United Nations. I speak therefore from the perspective of SIDS.

Mr. President, Barbados believes that the Post-2015 Development Agenda should involve commitments to:

- the eradication of poverty and hunger;
- environmental sustainability with a strong emphasis on coastal and marine resources;
- the development of sustainable and accessible renewable energy technologies;

- the pursuit of a sustainable agriculture agenda in tandem with food and nutrition security;
- gender equality and women's empowerment; and
- youth development, education and employment.

We also call for emphasis on:

- the inclusion of vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities;
- the requisite means of implementation including capacity building, technology transfer, trade and technical cooperation;
- the integration of appropriate systems for accountability, monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and
- good governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of the law.

Mr. President,

This is not a mere shopping list. It reflects the understanding that all these issues are inextricably linked. They represent challenges or problems that must be tackled simultaneously, if we are to achieve sustainable development. These cannot be addressed in a silo-like manner.

The importance of a policy of sustainable development cannot be understated. It is a matter of survival. It is for this reason that the Government of Barbados has envisioned the building of a Green Economy as our strategy for advancing our Sustainable Development Agenda.

As Prime Minister Freundel Stuart indicated, in the Foreword to the Green Economy Scoping Study Synthesis Report on Barbados *“the Green Economy debate recognises our structural vulnerabilities, offers a model to assist us in*

further realising our sustainable development aspirations and creates the institutional platform that would enable us to participate in innovative partnerships in the fight to save our planet, against mounting unsustainable consumption and production patterns”.

Our situation as a special case for development holds as true today as it did over twenty years ago when the UN system first acknowledged our special vulnerabilities and our special link to ocean resources. In Barbados' case, we are of the opinion that a Green Economy is inextricably tied to our development and as such should not be lost in this very important discussion.

Mr. President,

Over the past several months, increasing attention has been focused on the preparatory process for the Third International Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS in Samoa in 2014. Three Regional Preparatory Meetings in the various SIDS regions were convened in July. You may recall that the Inter-Regional meeting was held in my country Barbados, the birthplace of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS-the Barbados Programme of Action or BPOA.

Barbados attaches great importance to the preparatory process for the Samoa Conference. As we take stock after almost 20 years of the implementation of the BPOA and 10 years of the Mauritius Strategy for the further Implementation of the BPOA, we wish to emphasise that this process is as an integral part of the overall Post-2015 Development Agenda. This preparatory process is one which can strengthen the collective action of SIDS in addressing their vulnerabilities and

special development challenges. Prime Minister Stuart of Barbados referred to this in Barbados recently as building a “**SIDS Collectivity.**”

The support of the international community must underpin this concept of SIDS Collectivity, via:

- i. Strengthening inter and intra-regional collaboration between SIDS and the various SIDS regions,
- ii. Increasing emphasis on institutional building including the establishment of an appropriate institutional mechanism to facilitate, in particular intra-regional collaboration among SIDS. Credence is given to this approach by *United Nations Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Global Sustainability*. This report stressed that the building of effective institutional governance, at the local, national, regional and global levels, is essential for achieving sustainable development.
- iii. Facilitating greater utilisation of science and technology in helping to address many of the issues being faced by our young people in strengthening the interface between youth talent, innovation and entrepreneurship; and
- iv. Speaking with one voice at the international level on issues impacting on SIDS sustainable development.

FINDING SOLUTIONS

Mr. President,

Barbados believes firmly that south-south and triangular cooperation must be part of any effort to reform the existing international development cooperation architecture and to build more inclusive global partnerships for effective

development cooperation. We possess a wealth of experience in areas that we can share with developing and middle income countries:

- education and training,
- health care
- social partnering,
- clean energy policies and technologies
- environmental protection including coastal conservation, and
- the provision of social safety nets.

Like other SIDS, however, we are constrained by limited financial resources and the persistent and prolonged global financial crisis, which continue to have a negative impact on resource mobilisation and financial flows to developing countries.

Barbados supports the observation made by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, that there is a need to incentivise the Global South to invest more in multilateral forms of South-South cooperation. We welcome therefore, the formation of partnerships with the private sector, international organisations, donors and civil society organisations specifically designed to better facilitate such South-South Cooperation.

Mr. President,

There is clear need for greater equity, fairness and transparency in the method employed to determine socio-economic classifications and resource allocation. The persistent use of arbitrarily-determined international classification and ratings systems which are 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 reference again the observation by the UN Secretary General that GDP per capita on its own is an inadequate indicator. We also applaud the useful research being conducted on vulnerability indices and other measures beyond GDP by bodies such as the Commonwealth, ECLAC and the UN Statistical Commission. Barbados will continue its advocacy on this issue.

Mr. President,

Barbados is not unique. Like other SIDS, we recognise that our efforts to achieve sustainable development must of necessity incorporate delivery modalities encompassing: Finance, Good Governance, Development Cooperation, Trade Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening. Barbados therefore reminds this body that we must foster strong partnerships if we are to craft effective and truly lasting global solutions.

We call on member states to revisit the Small Island Developing States Technical Assistance Programme (SIDS-TAP) as a means of enabling the transfer of skills, knowledge and experience across SIDS and the three SIDS regions. We hold the view that this Programme offers much potential for enhancing capacity and access to SIDS-grown technologies and skill sets. SIDS-TAP must be seen as an important mechanism for advancing the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Non-communicable Diseases

Mr. President,

The provision of free healthcare for Barbadian citizens has been a critical contributor to Barbados' high level of human development. The treatment and prevention of Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (CNCDs) however account

for a disproportionately large percentage of our national healthcare budget. This has meant the diversion of scarce resources which should have been devoted to achieving other development goals.

As such CNCDs constitute one of the major challenges to Barbados' sustainable development, effectively threatening the development gains which Barbados has made.

Barbados' strong commitment to preventing and combating CNCDs is reflected in strong multi-stakeholder partnerships, including the dedicated engagement of civil society. Despite the national prioritisation of non-communicable diseases, the focus on prevention, and the implementation of evidence-based programmes, a developing country such as Barbados cannot, on its own, achieve its national objectives. International cooperation and assistance in this area is critical.

International Peace and Security

Mr. President,

My country does not draw a dividing line between its domestic and foreign policies. We have been blessed with stable governments. We have enjoyed a tradition of constitutional change in our governments since Independence. As a nation we have strived to create a just society. We see an inextricable link between development and international peace and security. Without development, there can be no international peace and security and without international peace and security, the development agenda will not succeed.

For Barbados, therefore, the rule of law, at the national and international level, is an indispensable condition for sustainable development. Barbados is deeply

concerned by the number of national, regional and international conflicts raging around the world. We are yet more concerned that the threshold of what constitutes an acceptable level of violence and acceptable levels of atrocity grows higher and higher. The findings of the UN Inspection Team that chemical weapons were used in Syria are alarming. My country believes that the perpetrators of these acts must be brought to account. Moreover we believe that the international community must work in good faith to find a political solution to the escalating and ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria.

At the same time, the international community must not lose sight of the many conflicts and acts of terror, which continue around the world. Against this background, my delegation wishes to extend profound condolences to the Government and people of Kenya on the recent terrorist attacks that were perpetrated against the people of Kenya. As we have stated, there can be no justification for acts of terror.

Mr. President,

In Barbados, and the Caribbean, illicit small arms and light weapons are the weapons of mass destruction. Primarily linked to international drug trafficking and other transnational organised crime, the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the Caribbean exacts a heavy toll on state and citizen security and impairs national development.

For this reason, Barbados, and CARICOM, consistently argued for the elaboration of a robust, legally-binding ATT, which would set the highest common international standards for regulating the transfer of conventional arms. Barbados is pleased therefore to be amongst those Member States which have signed the

Arms Trade Treaty. It is our hope that the implementation of the Treaty will lead to a reduction in the flow of illicit small arms, light weapons, their ammunition, parts and components, thus contributing to the reduction in armed conflict and violence.

Mr. President,

Our first Prime Minister, now national Hero, The Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, in his maiden speech to this august body on December 9, 1966 stated: *“We have no quarrels to pursue and we particularly insist that we do not hold any State as our natural opponent. We will not regard any great Power as necessarily right in a given dispute unless we are convinced of this, yet at the same time, we will not view the great Powers with perennial suspicion”*.

The United Nations was established in the aftermath of the Second World War to promote international peace and security. We call on the UN Security Council to meet its obligations to the international community. It is clear that there cannot be business as usual, while humanitarian crises continue to emerge and countless lives continue to be lost.

Mr. President,

My delegation therefore remains concerned about the economic embargo which continues to be imposed on Cuba as well as the extra-territorial impact that that embargo continues to have on countries in and outside our region. We call for the ending of this embargo and trust that it will soon be ushered into the pages of history.

Mr. President,

My delegation looks forward to the further unfolding of the post-2015 development agenda during this 68th Session of the General Assembly and I wish you ever success as you guide the General Assembly in realising an Agenda that is inclusive and will redound to the benefit of all.

I thank you.