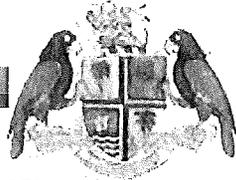


COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA



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-EIGHT SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, October 1, 2013

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**Statement by
His Excellency Vince Henderson
Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of Dominica to the
United Nations**

The President of the General Assembly, Mr. Secretary General, Heads and Members of Delegations, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I begin by extending congratulations to H.E. Dr. John Ashe of our sister Caribbean Island of Antigua and Barbuda on his well-deserved election to the Presidency of the General Assembly. The Government and the People of the Commonwealth of Dominica are proud of your appointment and wish you success in this 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. We also express our appreciation and gratitude to your predecessor, H.E. Vuk Jeremic for his guidance over the 67th Session.

Mr. President:

Thirteen years after collectively committing ourselves to the attainment of our noble Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we have made some progress globally, but are still far from full realization of our targets.

Despite the challenges brought about by an increasingly hostile global environment, Dominica has made meaningful progress towards the achievement of

Excellencies, as we approach 2015, we must resolve to take stock. We must be forever mindful, that those who are condemned still await our intervention; the over a billion people who have only known darkness at the end of each day, long for at least one light bulb in a rural home so that their children can have opportunities for a brighter tomorrow. We have run out of excuses about why we are waiting to act or why we cannot act. Our people will only remember that we failed to act to make a difference in their lives.

Mr. President, South-South Cooperation continues to play a significant role in assisting small countries like Dominica achieve MDG targets. The Government and people of Dominica express sincere gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of China, Venezuela, Cuba, Morocco, the European Union, ALBA and other bilateral and multilateral partners for the tremendous contribution they have made, and continue to make, in the development of our human resource capacity, infrastructure and the implementation of our public sector investment program.

Our commitment to the MDGs should see a redoubling of efforts towards the post-2015 agenda that will bring about development which is inclusive and sustainable. The outcome of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development initiated an

Climate Change (AGECC), as well as colleagues within and outside the United Nations (UN) system, for their timely recommendations and for bringing needed visibility to the subject of sustainable energy.

Their recommendations form the basis of one of the most important initiatives ever launched by a Secretary General – the *Sustainable Energy For All Initiative (SE4ALL)*, launched in 2011. Through this visionary move, the Secretary-General has closed the gaping energy poverty gap in the MDGs.

Mr. President,

Actions which will benefit our peoples should be at the heart of the functions of this august body. The Commonwealth of Dominica and other small and low lying developing states that are members of the Small Island Developing States Sustainable Energy Initiative – SIDS DOCK, are grateful to the Secretary-General for his dedication, personal commitment and actions in helping to make SE4ALL a reality. This initiative stands to benefit our people across the developing world, as well as contribute to more efficient energy systems in developed countries.

The Commonwealth of Dominica maintains that sustainable energy is the foundation for long-term socio-economic development. For this reason, Dominica

The Commonwealth of Dominica is privileged to be the current Chair of the 31-member SIDS DOCK Steering Committee, which is charged with guiding the development of the organisation. Therefore, on behalf of our members, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the governments of Denmark and Japan for their recognition and financial support to SIDS DOCK. The organisation is well positioned to help tackle the effects of climate change while at the same time transform energy sectors in small island developing states like Dominica.

Our Danish partners took the first bold move to support SIDS DOCK, and this move was the catalyst for support from the Government of Japan. Assistance from Japan will be invested in the first ever Ocean Thermal Energy Feasibility Study by a SIDS.

Ocean thermal energy is a resource common to all SIDS, and represents a vast sustainable energy resource which once developed, could also address a number of key climate change adaptation challenges for islands, specifically in the area of freshwater and improved food security.

About two thirds of the world's surface is covered by oceans and seas which connect almost 90 percent of the Earth's population. Oceans and seas remain the

Mr. President;

It must be underscored that in the twenty-first century, industrialization must be inclusive and sustainable if all our present and future generations are to benefit. It must incorporate all citizens and strategically tailored to preserve livelihoods for future generations.

Sustainable development goals, however, cannot be achieved in the midst of wars between or within nations.

Mr. President:

The Commonwealth of Dominica condemns the act of terrorism at the West Gate Shopping Mall in Kenya. We extend our condolences to the government and people of Kenya, and to the families of the Kenyans and the foreign nationals who met their deaths at the hands of those who have no respect for human life. We must continue to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Mr. President;

The ongoing civil war in Syria continues to present a major challenge to the international community. The Commonwealth of Dominica joins CARICOM in condemning unreservedly the use of chemical weapons which is a gross violation of international law. We call on all parties involved in the conflict to bring an end

Mr. President:

As we prepare for the 2014 Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the Commonwealth of Dominica is keen on concrete progress for SIDS aimed at creating a future of prosperity and opportunity for all. In that regard, my Government calls for a renewed political commitment by all countries to effectively address the special needs and vulnerabilities which affect SIDS. We believe that this would require a consolidated effort focused on pragmatic actions for the further implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPOA) and the Mauritius Strategy Initiative (MSI).

Dominica laments that international financial mechanisms have failed to fully recognize and support the vulnerabilities of SIDS. SIDS must be allowed access to financing for development. The United Nations system needs to be strengthened to implement the BPOA and the MSI.

Mr. President:

On April 2, 2013, the Commonwealth of Dominica was one of the overwhelming number of member states voting in favor of the first international treaty to regulate the trade of conventional weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Today we are pleased that the ATT is now a reality. This is a significant milestone as such

the world's generation of energy from fossil fuels to renewable sources able to power sustainable industrial development.

Samoa 2014, presents an ideal opportunity for the international community to collectively chart a path towards the sustainable development of SIDS and set the stage for the post-2015 development agenda. The Commonwealth of Dominica remains committed to progress made thus far, and look forward with great anticipation to the forging of durable and sustainable partnerships.

I wish delegates to this 68th session every success in their deliberations.

