



PERMANENT MISSION OF SAINT LUCIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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OF SAINT LUCIA

TO THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE

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Please check against delivery.

Mr. President,

I address this august body today with a sense of deep humility and great pride – humility in the wake of those great architects of world peace, who have stood here before me.

In this regard, Mr. President, I will utilize my maiden address to this distinguished body to pay homage to those who fostered the birth and initial dynamics of our United Nations. Therefore, on this occasion, I find it more than proper to utilize the principles contained in the UN Charter as a ready compass in which to set my course as I navigate the issues, which occupy the forefront of our attention.

But as I indicate the perspectives of my own country on present trends, let me first, take the opportunity to congratulate you Mr. President, a representative of a member-state from my own Caribbean Region, on your election to the Presidency of the General Assembly for this year.

It is a tribute to the recognition by members of this body that all states, the very large or the very small, have a deep and extensive interest in the evolution of relations in the world community, and a legitimate contribution to make towards resolving the problems that are impacting negatively on us.

At this juncture, permit me Mr. President to commence my navigation. The first principle of the Charter reads as follows:

To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;

Mr. President,

Our world today vibrates with dynamic political changes, some welcome, some threatening to the interests of small countries, and therefore unwelcome. Like other member-states, we appeal for a peaceful resolution of disputes, and in that regard welcome the developments in the Middle East, and specifically in relation to Syria, where the claims for and attempts at peaceful and negotiated resolution of disputes have, at this time been made to take preference over the threats of the weapons of war.

It is important Mr. President, that in such matters we do not get caught up in the emotions of the moment; we must be cerebral about these matters: because in moments like these emotion is no substitute for intelligence, nor rigidity for prudence.

We do not, Mr. President underestimate the inherent difficulties in the resolution of issues and disputes between nations in the Middle East. But we stand for the right to self-determination as a basic principle of any people's existence, and hope that in other parts of that area, the claims to entitlement of the people of Palestine will continue to be subject primarily to the mechanisms of persistent, even though prolonged, negotiation, as against any inclination to the threat of violence and war.

We are fortunate, Mr. President to have the United Nations as a framework within which we can organize ourselves into an integrated whole to negotiate with patience and persistence until agreement and or compromise is reached.

The Charter's second principle, Mr. President, is:

To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

Mr. President, Saint Lucia, as a small state in a hemisphere of both small and large states emphasizes the use of diplomacy as a prime instrument for the pursuit of the normalization of relations. We note the increasing mutual involvement of the peoples on both sides of the China straits, and express the hope that this will lead to normal relations beneficial to all the peoples of the world.

In that regard, we welcome the response given by the membership of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) embracing the Republic of China on Taiwan in aspects of its proceedings. This can be an appropriate model for the further engagement of Taiwan in international organizations, thus permitting the country to play its role more effectively in global development.

In this same context, Mr. President, the government of St Lucia reiterates its support for the inclusion of Cuba in all regional and hemispheric organizations which it is disposed to join. We support the removal of what can now clearly be seen as forced exclusions, which are surely no longer permissible under the new rules and regimes of balanced diplomacy.

As is evident, Mr. President, the exclusion of Cuba from normal and complete intercourse, remains an open wound in the heart of our Hemisphere, which is unnecessary and needs to be closed. Therefore, Saint Lucia reiterates its support for persistent international efforts toward the removal of the unconscionable embargo that inhibits Cuba's legitimate efforts at economic growth and full hemispheric cooperation.

Mr. President, the third principle of the Charter is:

To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion;

Mr. President, in consonance with the theme chosen for this year's General Debate, "*The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage*", when the world approached the 21st Century, the United Nations (UN) took the lead and set the International Development Agenda. The Organisation made a loud and clear declaration of war against:

1. Extreme Poverty and Hunger
2. Illiteracy
3. Gender Inequality
4. Child Mortality

5. Poor Maternal HealthCare
6. HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
7. Environmental Degradation
8. The Forces that Fight to Fragment our Global Partnership for Development.

Our Declaration was appropriately titled: “The Millennium Development Goals” and they were time bound and target driven.

Today, less than two (2) years before the 2015 time deadline arrives, we find ourselves facing new, mutating and increasingly menacing development challenges. Youth unemployment has reached crisis proportions globally, high debt levels have threatened the solvency, security and economic stability of Small Island Developing States; and climate change and the increasing ferocity of natural and man-made disasters, including the slow onset of events like sea level rise; have threatened the environmental sustainability and the very existence of nations, particularly Small Island Developing States.

Global inter-dependence demands that the strong helps the weak so that everyone can get strong. The setting of the Post-2015 Development Agenda is a watershed moment in global history and it is a process in which all countries must participate meaningfully.

The rich must resist the temptation to retreat inwardly at this time, as this can shut down the global economic engine. The Post-2015 International Development Agenda must be driven by common aspirations, shared goals and a unified vision of a secure and serene world, which we can proudly bequeath to the next and succeeding generations.

Saint Lucia and several other states in the Caribbean and across the World have already embarked upon, and completed Post-2015 Consultations, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). At least twenty (20) such national consultations have been conducted and they provide invaluable inputs for the Post-2015 Agenda. They emphasized that Saint Lucia and other SIDS in the Caribbean, Pacific, African and other regions have serious vulnerabilities which seem to have escaped the Gross Domestic Product or GDP eyes of some of our development partners.

The Post-2015 Agenda must therefore address in a very real way, the issues of concern to SIDS, such as sea level rise, non-communicable diseases, loss and damage assessment and funding relative to natural and man-made disasters. We are also concerned about the causes of climate change, particularly our over-dependence on fossil fuels, and its decimating march on the debt profiles of our small, under-developed and vulnerable economies.

And so we want to arrest the adverse consequences of climate change before they cripple us, and we want to accelerate the transition to renewable energy using clean, green technology.

In May 2012, our region hosted the Global SIDS Sustainable Energy for All Conference in Barbados, and together with UNDP and other International partners we resolved to set targets for increasing the renewable component of our energy mix. Again, only a month ago in Barbados in August 2013, at the 3rd SIDS Inter Regional Meeting in preparation for the Global SIDS Conference 2014 in Samoa; our countries re-affirmed their commitments and calls for the world to pay attention to the special vulnerabilities of SIDS.

This is, Mr. President, in keeping with the fourth principle of the UN Charter, which is:

To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

In that regard, we recognize a number of initiatives. First, that the *outcome document* of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals requested the Secretary-General to initiate thinking on a post-2015 development agenda, and to include recommendations in his Annual Report on efforts to accelerate MDG progress.

We recognize, further, that the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development initiated an inclusive intergovernmental process to prepare a set of Sustainable Development Goals. We also note the work of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, of which my government is a member, on sustainable development financing.

This work, Mr. President, corresponds to activities presently underway in the Caribbean Community Region directed at defining and implementing policies relating to how our countries, substantially affected by the global recession, and by new trends and rules that effectively negate their effective participation in international trade, can respond.

Such initiatives are reflected in ongoing work at our regional level undertaken by our Caribbean Development Bank, whose President has recently (earlier this month) stressed the need for a new urgency for implementation of policies, from within the Caribbean Community and outside, to induce the emergence of the Bank's member-states from the effects of the global recession of this decade.

Mr. President, we take special cognizance of the just concluded Special Event convened by you to follow up on efforts made toward achieving the MDGs. We concur with the recommendations that permit a framework for a responsive evolution by countries like mine to the new international environment, including the urgent fulfillment of the ODA commitments made by developed countries, and the importance of the MDG's as critical for meeting the basic needs of people of developing countries.

Mr. President, all these initiatives of the world community must, as I have hinted earlier, urgently include arrangements, including the development of an *Adaptation Fund*, that can enhance the capabilities of small island developing states (SIDS) to begin construction of facilities that can protect our countries against sea-level rise and natural disasters.

Further, Mr. President, given the turbulent and unpredictable world situation that we as small states face, we have been compelled to reassess, restructure and reformulate domestic and foreign policy postures to permit a realistic readjustment of our economic and political strategies and to reshape external relations along more contemporary and multi-dimensional lines.

In this regard, my Government has been making a special effort at regional and international outreach. Within the Hemisphere, we have witnessed the establishment, and active engagement of both the Union of South American States (UNASUR) and the

Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and St Lucia, like other Caribbean Community states has actively engaged with them where eligible.

It is in that vein too, Mr. President, that we have also joined the *Bolivarian Alliance For The Americas* (ALBA), as a means of deliberately widening our activities in the Hemisphere, and ensuring that the smaller members of this geopolitical zone take full advantage of efforts directed to advancing our countries' economic growth, reducing economic inequalities deriving from small size, and ensuring full participation in regional and global decision-making that inevitably affects us.

Mr. President, as I speak of an increasingly legitimated balance of global relations and the evolution of political principles and practices based on them, I take this opportunity to join other colleagues of the Caribbean Community in drawing attention to a decision of the Heads of States and Government of the Community, taken at their 34th Regular Meeting in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago in July this year.

This decision mandates our Governments to collectively seek reparations, on behalf of our citizens and countries, for the period of exploitation experienced during the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Our Governments have therefore, initially agreed to the establishment of a Caribbean Reparations Commission that will prepare relevant documentation, and strategies, to pursue the practical achievement of this goal with the central focus of righting the wrongs of the past, and elevating the status of our people.

In this regard, Mr. President, we will continue to conduct a process of diplomatic outreach not only within our own hemisphere and the states of the African continent, the geographic locations of our ancestors, but within the wider UN family.

Mr. President, I seek to reiterate the importance for small countries like my own, of deliberate and continuing efforts towards peaceful resolution of disputes. And In that connection, Mr. President, we support a deliberate strengthening of the institutional arrangements of this United Nations Organisation itself, to facilitate the mandate placed upon it at this time.

Mr. President, as you are aware, Caribbean Community states have been actively engaged in developments relating to Member States' commitment to the reform of the Security Council.

An activity in which Saint Lucia's Permanent Representative has been directly involved, with particular reference to the issue of the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council, thus giving further legitimacy to the decision making of the body. We look forward to deliberate progress on this matter.

Mr. President, for my part, I can only reecho the words of a great man: "Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given him but once, he must so live as not to be besmeared with the shame of a cowardly existence and trivial past, so live that dying he might say: all my life and my strength were given to the finest cause in the world – the liberation of mankind." And it is to this aim that my country and I devote every moment of our time.

Mr. President, as I close I thank you and extend to you the best wishes and support of Saint Lucia for a successful tenure of office as you pursue the tasks, some visible, and undoubtedly some not yet foreseen, of the coming year. The hope of my country, Mr. President is that as we navigate uncharted waters, we continually refer to the principles of the Charter, to which I have referred, to ensure that our Organisation remains on course.