



STATEMENT BY
H.E. MR. JAMES ALIX MICHEL
PRESIDENT
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES
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Mr. President of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

“We the peoples of the United Nations determined...” Bold and visionary words drafted 70 years ago, providing the United Nations with its sense of purpose. And the world with a vision that continues to inspire and motivate us.

I have always believed in this vision. We all do, in fact. Yet – in spite of all the good intentions and the inspiration we continue to draw from the Charter – something seems to be sorely lacking. **Determination!** And President Lykketoft’s urging for *“a new commitment to action”* more than confirms this.

His experience affords him the privilege of speaking his mind. So does mine!

Look around us. What do we see? A world lacking in determination. A world torn apart by vicious wars and conflicts. A world where poverty, hunger, famine and epidemics continue to grow unabated. Where inequality, injustice and disparity are on the rise. A world where environmental degradation and despoliation go unchecked. A world – our world – menaced by climate change.

Is this the legacy we want to leave to our children?

No, my friends. It cannot be so. We must hear the cries of the children who are hungry, who are in distress. We must hear the cries of despair of islanders affected by the effects of climate change. We must feel the pain of women struggling to keep their children alive. We must stop spending money to destroy lives. Instead we must act together not only to keep alive those struggling to survive, but to give meaning to their lives. We have therefore a duty and an obligation to change the world we live in. To make it a better place. For the present generation and for future generations.

We can make it happen if we set our minds to it. If we – who are in a privileged position to lead our peoples – accept our responsibilities. If we cast aside indecisiveness. If we look beyond the narrow pursuit of ideological and national interests.

We can make it happen if we adopt – not half-heartedly but resolutely so – the principles of justice and fairness.

Let’s start with the United Nations itself. Its lofty ideals are as relevant today as when it was founded. However, its structures of governance – in particular, the Security Council – are not. In today’s world, it represents a fundamentally undemocratic and unrepresentative institution.

The same is applicable to the international organisations set up in the wake of the creation of the United Nations. We have to make them relevant to the realities of the present era.

We need action, determination and commitment to set things right and to make them all relevant to the century we live in. And to give true meaning to an all-inclusive and participatory democracy.

We also need resolute action for the spirit and essence of sustainable development to be truly embraced globally. Many challenges still remain. Especially for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We are the sentinels of nature and the guardians of our oceans. But the actions or inaction – as the case may be – of others threaten our livelihood and very existence.

As Pope Francis has just highlighted, we must break the present growth model and give primacy to the protection of nature over consumerism, thereby minimising the effects of climate change.

Climate change is not of the making of SIDS, yet we bear the full brunt of it. That is why we shall never cease to raise the issue in every forum, including this one. Because we are the conscience of the world.

Mr. President,

You have set the tone for a new commitment to action and – I daresay – to determination in your acceptance speech. The two are indivisible. They form the appropriate backdrop to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2030 Agenda sets realistic goals, targets and a timeframe for the creation of a better world, leaving no one behind. It is an all-inclusive agenda which makes it abundantly clear that there can be *“no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development”*.

Sustainability has always been and will continue to be at the heart of the development efforts of Seychelles. Together with our fellow SIDS we have been actively engaged in this discourse to ensure that our concerns and needs are adequately addressed.

The engagement of the United Nations under the bold leadership of the Secretary General has given us a ray of hope.

We have again seen many commitments and pledges. But will those alone resolve our challenges? No, they will not, unless they are translated into concrete actions.

The application, or rather the non-application, of the principle of special and differential treatment of Small Island Developing States is one of our major preoccupations. It is not because some of us have achieved upper middle income or high-income status that our development efforts are thwarted through the non-provision of international funds at concessionary rates.

A *“one size fits all”* approach to development cannot be the order of the day. It is unjust and morally unacceptable. We, the inhabitants of Small Island Developing States shall constantly remind you of this.

Because islands remain the moral compass of the world. Because our own agenda is inextricably linked to humanity's. And we shall always insist on the need for a more tailored approach in the tackling of the specific challenges that we face. One which takes into account our vulnerabilities. The lack of an appropriate vulnerability index that can be applied affectively to development, hampers the effective empowerment of all UN members.

Mr. President,

Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda is of particular importance to all SIDS and coastal states. It presents us with the unique opportunity to set a standard for global governance of the oceans and the seas. The goal of "*conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*," provides the thrust for the Blue Economy. This concept has been adopted by many Small Island Developing States as a mechanism to realise sustainable growth, based around an ocean economy and ocean governance.

The Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius strategy and the SAMOA Pathway are the key to this. For oceanic nations the sea is our lifeblood and the Blue Economy is the catalyst upon which we learn to thrive.

But we cannot thrive in an environment of insecurity. Maritime security is of the utmost importance to the vast majority of SIDS and to coastal states. In our part of the world, though piracy is on the wane, we must remain vigilant. However, as we have demonstrated in the case of piracy, global alliances have made a difference in providing security when there was none. In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations and other international partners for all the support in our fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean.

My hope is that this model is replicated to tackle other issues of similar ilk that are threatening our collective resolve to build lasting peace. The likes of terrorist organisations pose threats with lasting repercussions reverberating across borders.

The growing refugee crisis reminds us that we should all shoulder the burden of fighting the ideologies of hate and embrace bonds of fraternity and solidarity.

Mr. President,

Looking to Paris let us use the little time that is left to build further momentum and support in order to reach an ambitious and universal agreement to combat climate change. Paris is not just another international negotiation. It will be the crucial and decisive moment of choice for all of us.

We cannot allow ourselves to be condemned to the wrong side of history by our collective failure to reach an agreement. The stakes are too high. An agreement is within our reach provided we are able to summon collective political will and leadership. The time is now.

We can make it happen. We must make it happen. We must fulfil promises and commitments made, especially in terms of financing options to build climate resilience. In this regard, we call on all developed countries to fulfil their commitments for the mobilisation of \$100 billion annually, by 2020, for the operationalisation of the Green Climate Fund.

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Fellow Heads of State and Government,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Seychelles as one of the smallest members of the United Nations family will continue to play an active role in the United Nations efforts to create a just and safer world.

The commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations is a unique opportunity to transform the world by our own efforts and commitments, and to ensure that collective cooperation and partnership triumph over rivalry and mistrust. In this spirit we salute the rapprochement between the United States of America and Cuba. This is the unique opportunity to choose the future we want for ourselves, for our youth for our children. We must give them a better deal. They deserve a better deal.

Let us truly become what we are destined to be: committed, determined, united and empowered nations forging our future together. Yes, together!

Thank you.