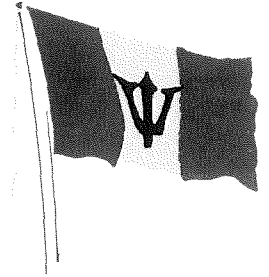


*Permanent Mission  
of Barbados to  
the United Nations*



**STATEMENT BY**

**THE RT. HON. FREUNDEL J. STUART, Q.C., M.P.**

**PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS**

**AT THE**

**GENERAL DEBATE**

**OF THE**

**70<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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*Please check against delivery*

Mr. President,

Permit me to begin by congratulating you on your election to the Presidency of General Assembly in this 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the United Nations. You represent a country, Denmark, whose service to the United Nations and the global community has been exemplary. I anticipate that, upholding those fine traditions, you will guide us judiciously as we embark on the journey toward this organisation's centenary. I assure you of Barbados' full support as we begin to implement Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, striving collectively to address the diverse challenges which face member countries of the international community.

I take this opportunity also to express the sincere admiration of my delegation for the sterling manner in which your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa so ably guided the work of the General Assembly during the 69<sup>th</sup> Session.

Mr. President,

Three score and ten years ago, fifty delegations, assisted by a temporary secretariat, gathered in San Francisco to sign the Charter which established

the United Nations. That was a moment the consequences of which have been felt across geography and time and resonate with a unique power to this day. Of course, Barbados - and the overwhelming majority of countries which today make up the United Nations - was not among the countries represented in San Francisco on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June nineteen hundred and forty five. Only fifty delegations gathered then, representing generally the victors of the Second World War.

In stark contrast with the select group gathered on that summer day in 1945, today the membership of this organization totals one hundred and ninety-three states, representing virtually all of mankind.

In Paris in December this year, one hundred and ninety-six delegations, including that of Barbados, will gather for the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. At that meeting we will agree to collective action which will make possible the continued survival of our planet. This is an existential issue for all countries but in particular for those like mine that are Small Island

Developing States. Our countries stand on the edge of a yawning abyss opened up by climate change. For those who framed the Charter of this body the cessation of global war was the single existential threat. While undeniably, that threat remains, today it would be to our peril were we not to accord to climate change the same deadly capacity.

Barbados, and all the countries of the Caribbean Community, have made clear their view on what should be the outcome of the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties, that is:

- that all parties commit to take individual and collective action to curb greenhouse gas emissions in line with our ambitious goal to hold global average temperature increase to well below 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels;
- that all parties commit to cooperate in taking these actions, subjecting themselves, in the process, to regular 5-year cycles of reporting, verification and updating on mitigation commitments;

- that all parties commit to support the particularly vulnerable countries that are Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries.

In short, we need an ambitious, high performance, legally binding agreement with global participation.

The tragedy which struck our sister Caribbean nation of Dominica, battered last month by Tropical Storm Erika, highlights the urgency of an effective global response to climate change. As we have often seen, a single natural or manmade disaster in a small island developing state can have catastrophic economic, infrastructural and humanitarian effects on a national scale, and it has been estimated that the damage caused by Erika set back Dominica's development by twenty years.

As Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, I take this opportunity to express the region's unwavering solidarity with and commitment to our brothers and sisters in Dominica and call on the international community to continue to help Dominica in this its hour of need.

Mr. President,

History is a superb teacher. Seventy years on from the creation of the UN, it is appropriate that we reflect on the path which small states like mine have helped to prepare. It is a path in large part made possible by the principles this organisation has embraced from its inception and which are embodied in the Charter and in the UN's many treaties, resolutions and plans of action. A path from exclusivity to universality; a path which has seen a near quadrupling of this organisation's membership in 70 years; a path to an international legal order which seeks to balance the rights of states with their responsibilities, including responsibility to their citizens.

Without question, these changes combine to reflect a significant and positive transformation of the international system: a transformation which has seen the country I have the honour to represent today, move from the subordination of colonial status to full sovereignty. Next year, 2016, Barbados will proudly celebrate the Fiftieth Year of its Independence and of its membership of the United Nations. The United Nations has provided a

forum where countries, no matter their size or geopolitical influence, can meet, discuss and sometimes argue, always on an equal footing.

The transformation of the UN has provided necessary but hardly sufficient conditions for this organization to realize the extraordinary promise expressed in the preamble and first article of the Charter:

- Member States have failed to eliminate the scourge of war;
- Relations among nations are not everywhere friendly;
- International cooperation has not by itself solved many international economic, social, cultural or humanitarian problems, nor has it everywhere encouraged respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- The United Nations itself has not proven able to harmonize the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

And for small, developing countries in particular, the promised emphasis on development has yet to be fully realized. In any event, development is a plant of tender growth and cannot flourish in an environment where there is no peace. It is therefore heartening to learn of the lessening of tensions between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Cooperative Republic

of Guyana, facilitated by the UN Secretary General, tensions which have over the years had the effect of stymying the development potential of Guyana. I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to express Barbados' unwavering commitment to the territorial integrity of Guyana, and state our support for a juridical solution to this dispute which has lasted far too long.

Mr. President,

It is permissible to enquire whether the world is a safer and more peaceful place today than it was in 1945? While there have been no world wars of the kind that precipitated the founding of this organization, wars of proxy and internecine, fratricidal conflicts have proliferated. The United Nations has registered many successes in addressing the myriad challenges to peace and security that have confronted the international community over the last seventy years. However, as Member States, it is our responsibility, and ours alone, to ensure that the UN will be equipped and empowered to do much more.



Like many around the world, we in the Caribbean are deeply concerned about the connected crises of refugees and the internally-displaced. We regret that the international community has failed to take the firm political action necessary to bring these crises to an end. We underscore that if persons are able to live in peace and security, in an environment where their human rights are respected, there would be little compulsion to flee their countries, often under conditions which place their lives, and those of their children, in peril. We cannot afford to be indifferent. As Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel has noted: "Indifference is always the friend of the enemy for it benefits the aggressor".

Mr President,

I have described the contours of an international system radically different from the one into which the United Nations was born seventy years ago. Collectively and individually, we struggle to address many of the problems faced by this new world.

In 2013 the United Nations adopted the Arms Trade Treaty to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons, with the expectation that it

will contribute to the prevention and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Through the determined efforts of the countries of the Caribbean Community and other like-minded states, small arms and light weapons and their ammunitions, parts and components were included in the scope of the Treaty. Barbados was therefore pleased to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in May of this year.

In July of this year, under the presidency of New Zealand, the Security Council held its first ever open debate on the particular peace and security challenges facing small island developing states. At that meeting, Barbados indicated that it always has and continues strongly to oppose the proliferation and use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. However, for countries like Barbados, the real weapons of mass destruction are small arms and light weapons and our focus is necessarily on the trade in these weapons, which often goes arm-in-arm with the traffic in illicit drugs and other organised crime. Both have the capacity to seriously undermine our economies and destabilise our societies.

Barbados welcomes the initiative and persistence that made possible the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, and commits to playing its part in addressing global peace and security challenges.

Also in July of this year, we adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which provides a series of bold measures to overhaul global finance practices and generate investments for tackling a range of economic, social and environmental challenges.

Finally, last week, we adopted Agenda 2030, which formulates a new development agenda based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The link between Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda is clear: the former sets out the goals and the latter the means of their attainment. One without the other is bereft of meaning.

I take this opportunity to connect these important initiatives to a concern which the countries of the Caribbean Community and others have been expressing for some time, most recently during our meeting of Heads of

Government in July and which this year Barbados had the honour to host. The United Nations and International Financial Institutions must address the matter of graduation of Middle Income Countries such as Barbados from access to concessionary and grant-based financing.

Now, we contend, is the time to develop and utilise appropriate measurements for development that go beyond a simplistic reliance on a country's Gross Domestic Product per capita.

Mr. President,

It was with especial pleasure that we received the news earlier this year that, forty three years after Barbados and three other CARICOM states, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Guyana, had ended their diplomatic isolation of Cuba, the United States of America has decided to do the same. For Barbados this has been a positive development since consistently, insistently and persistently since 1972 we have been calling for an end to the economic embargo, which has not only retarded the development of Cuba but also cheated its people's aspirations of merited fulfilment.

My delegation congratulates President Barack Obama of the United States of America for the hindsight, the insight, and the foresight which informed his decision, and looks forward to the process of Cuba's total embrace being perfected by the removal, in the near future, of the economic embargo.

In similar vein, Mr. President, it is not without significance that twenty-one months before we adopted Agenda 2030, the General Assembly adopted a Resolution which declared an International Decade for People of African Descent, under the theme "*People of African Descent: recognition, justice and development*", commencing on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2015 and ending on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. The Decade was launched by the UN Secretary General in December 2014 with the feature address being delivered by Barbadian Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, then Pro- Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies.

My delegation confidently expects that as we pursue the Sustainable Development Goals, due regard will be accorded to the reparatory justice

contemplated not only by the theme of this very important decade, but also by its specific mention in the Programme of Activities for the implementation of the Decade.

Permit me, Mr. President, to reach back again into our organisation's history for it continues to illuminate our present and set out the way forward for our future. When he took office as the United Nations' first Secretary-General, the distinguished Norwegian diplomat, Trygve Lie, said at the first General Assembly, on the second of February, nineteen hundred and forty six:

*The purpose of the United Nations is the maintenance of peace in an atmosphere of international security and general well-being... But there is a close connection between the peace problem and the economic and social conditions of the countries of the world.*

Barbados, a Small Island Developing State, has been, and remains, a staunch supporter of the United Nations, committed to the principles of multilateralism and the sovereign equality of States, and to the inextricable link between peace and security on the one hand and economic and social

development on the other. Today, these principles, we are proud to say, are nowhere better reflected than in the ideals to which member states of the United Nations still subscribe, in their collective march to promote, for the peoples of the world, social progress and better standards of life, in larger freedom.

I thank you.