



## **Commonwealth of Dominica**

Address by

**His Excellency Charles A. Savarin, SAH, DAH, GCCO**  
President of the Commonwealth of Dominica

On the occasion of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

**Theme: “*Rebuilding Trust and Re-igniting Global  
Solidarity: Accelerating Action on the 2030  
Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals  
Towards Peace, Prosperity, Progress and  
Sustainability for all.*”**

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United Nations Headquarters

New York

**Mr. President,  
Your Excellencies  
Heads of State and Heads of Government,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I bring you warm Greetings from the citizens of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

**Mr. President,**

My delegation and by extension the Government and People of the Commonwealth of Dominica, wish to congratulate you on your elevation to the office of President of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and wish you every success during your term.

As Dominica currently holds the Chairmanship of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I also extend to you the support of CARICOM during your tenure.

Your appointment is testament to the fact that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) contribution to the Multilateral System, is of crucial importance, particularly with the innumerable challenges confronting such States, globally.

Having served as Ambassador of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for several years, your experience and knowledge on many of the current issues impacting Member States, should serve you well in leading the Assembly over the next year.

**Mr. President,**

It is quite evident that the challenges being faced globally can be daunting; the climate crisis seemingly will not go away as evidenced for example by the recent wildfires in Hawaii and Canada, thereby illuminating the discussion on the need to give even more urgent attention to mitigation and climate financing.

Global inflation has impacted significantly on the livelihood of the most vulnerable, while there is justification for increasing concern over chronic non-communicable diseases adversely impacting the health and wellness of our people.

## **The Russian/Ukraine Conflict**

**Mr. President,**

The conflict in Ukraine continues unabated, amidst the global call for an end to this terrible war. Such a situation would normally be unthinkable in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As the conflict escalates, the World Bank's most recent estimate for reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine is placed at US \$411 billion dollars; this figure is expected to increase the longer the conflict persists.

All conflicts must eventually end at the negotiating table. Dominica therefore calls for an end to the fighting and for good faith negotiations to prevail. We join all those resolute in their international obligation, to uphold peace as outlined in

the UN Charter and we support the call for a resolution to the issues giving rise to the conflict.

To this end, Mr. President, Dominica endorses the Joint Declaration by the G20 on the Russia/Ukraine conflict and other global issues, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> G20 Summit held recently in New Delhi, India.

### **The African Summer**

**Mr. President,**

While we in Dominica are opposed to coups and attempted coups, we are also aware that in 2010, there were a series of uprisings affecting Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa which was dubbed in the West as the Arab Spring.

These uprisings, with at least the tacit support of the West, resulted in the removal of several governments. There was no talk of sanctions or military intervention to restore the ousted governments.

Today, Mr. President, we are witnessing what I refer to as the African Summer and we are hearing the drum beat of sanctions and military intervention. What is the difference between the Arab Spring and the African Summer, I ask?

The international community should pay heed to the wisdom of the leaders of the African Union, who have opposed military intervention and urged diplomatic engagement.

The question is, whose interest would military intervention serve? Certainly not the people of Africa.

We in Dominica and the Caribbean urge, that in all such situations, that the interest of the population be foremost in any consideration of intervention by neighbouring countries and indeed by the international community.

**Mr. President,**

This year's theme for the General Assembly, is in keeping with the strides we should all be making at the international and multilateral levels to achieve an accelerated and progressive implementation of the 2030 agenda.

The challenges faced by SIDS in achieving this objective are considerable. Typically, the narrow fiscal space and the increase in economic and environmental losses attributable,



to changes in weather patterns and other climate related events, have served to increase our vulnerabilities exponentially.

The evidence suggests, that we live in an imperfect world by virtue of our inherent geophysical and socio-economic characteristics, and some countries, Dominica included, will always be disproportionately disadvantaged by the actions of others.

In this regard, we welcome the High-level dialogue on “Financing for Development” and the call by the Secretary General for a Climate Ambition Summit. We are optimistic, that this forum will be a practical demonstration of a

commitment to securing the necessary funding to initiate transformative change.

**Mr. President,**

The key elements for accelerating realization of the 2030 agenda include, the harnessing of Information Communication Technologies (ICT's) and the role which Science will play in ensuring effective decision-making.

ICT's can provide a platform to get more done within a shorter period of time and further create an impetus, to bridge the generational gap, allowing for innovation and creativity to emerge to the fore.

Our Youth must be continually engaged thereby engendering a sense of trust in their leaders and institutions. This is critical to ensuring that the significant gaps which currently exist between the “haves” and the “have nots,” are addressed and drastically reduced.

Access to quality education, clean water, food security, proper health care, decent work, proper housing and economic growth taken altogether, must be the foundation upon which we continue to ensure that no one is left behind.

The immiserating of our more vulnerable societies by the unfair trade practices, must be replaced by trade practices which reasonably benefit primary producers and, support and/or encourage downstream processing and

manufacturing, while international resources must be targeted at the most vulnerable and indigent among us.

Only then can we be assured of achieving a society of prosperity, progress and sustainability for all.

**Mr. President,**

Advancement towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) must be people centered, complimented by policies which allow for security and peace.

The Government of Dominica recognizes the central role of its citizens in the decision-making process on major national issues and to this end, Government has engaged the expertise of the international community in reviewing its

electoral system and has embarked on a wide cross sectoral consultation, to hear varying views from every segment of the society on recommendations for electoral reform in the country.

It is therefore anticipated that when the final measures are brought before Parliament they will be in keeping with the views of the majority.

### **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

**Mr. President,**

The Commonwealth of Dominica will continue to identify with and champion the agenda of Small Island Developing States on the International level.

Accordingly, we wish to emphasize the need for the implementation of the Loss and Damage Fund agreed upon at COP27. Implementation of this fund will allow SIDS to access the required resources earmarked for the recovery of our vulnerable economies post disasters and further facilitate the creation of a vital safety net for our people.

**Mr. President,**

Over the last 30 years, SIDS have been advocating for resilience building measures based on our inherent vulnerabilities and the frequency and magnitude of increase in global shocks.

The lack of adequate assistance from developmental partners and international financial institutions has forced

governments to borrow at unfavorable terms, resulting in high repayment costs and unsustainable debt levels for our fragile economies.

To this end, Dominica fully supports the work on the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), which can contribute to unlocking the type of financing which is so urgently required.

Additionally, Dominica pledges its full support and participation in the upcoming SIDS Conference to be held in Antigua and Barbuda in 2024. This conference should serve as a watershed moment for all SIDS, such that action-oriented outcomes can be derived.

Moreover, mindful of the confluence of challenges confronting SIDS today, there should be no further delay in the much-needed reform of international financial institutions to address the contemporary realities of debt distress and debt-solvency.

Dominica therefore joins fellow Member States of CARICOM in support of the Bridgetown Initiative as a core blueprint for restructuring the architecture of sovereign debt.

### **Marine Biodiversity**

**Mr. President,**

My delegation unreservedly welcomes the adoption of the BBNJ Agreement. Building on the legacy of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, this achievement



reaffirms the UN's role in facilitating the implementation of multilaterally agreed solutions to global challenges. Dominica supports the early entry into force of this Agreement as well as its implementation.

My Delegation further welcomes the commitments shared by all, to ensure capacity-building and transfer of marine technology to support developing countries in their quest to implement and benefit from the said Agreement.

**HAITI**

**Mr. President,**

The prevailing situation in our fellow CARICOM Member State of Haiti is a dire one which deserves urgent international intervention.

Haiti faces deep-rooted crises on multiple fronts. Much of it arising from its post-independence relations with the international community, poor governance and the lingering effects of the catastrophic devastation visited on that country by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in January of 2010.

To date, Mr. President, while there may have been preliminary figures, I am not aware of any comprehensive assessment detailing the extent of the destruction of the 2010 earthquake nor a World Bank estimate of the cost of reconstruction, as has been done with the situation in Ukraine.

The fact remains that since 2010, Haiti has been hit by several earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, pandemics and sociopolitical instability. If ever there was a cause deserving the full attention of the international community, that cause is Haiti.

The Commonwealth of Dominica aligns itself with processes outlined by the Organisation of American States to support the people of Haiti in August 2022, and decisions taken by the CARICOM Community at its 45<sup>th</sup> Regular meeting of Heads of Government in July of this year, to lend active support to the Government and people of Haiti, in their efforts to arrive at a Haitian led solution to the ongoing crisis.

While both these institutions have offered commendable and necessary recommendations, even collectively, these will not be sufficient to normalise the current situation in Haiti.

### **Mr. President**

We have accepted that the crises in Haiti are not limited to food shortage and security. The IPC report lays bare the severity of Haiti's food crisis, noting: "that nearly half of the population is grappling with high levels of acute food insecurity."

Additionally, the Humanitarian situation is being further aggravated by a national security problem, including the illicit flow of arms and ammunition and gang-related violence.

The Commonwealth of Dominica is of the view, that a strategy which addresses the root causes of instability in Haiti will be embraced by the people of Haiti. We also underscore that such an approach cannot be pursued without the unwavering support of the international community.

My Delegation, therefore, calls on the Security Council to move decisively to offer support to Haiti in key priority areas including security, governance, education, health, water and electricity, sustainable livelihoods and long-term development planning and advocacy.

### **Cuban Embargo/Venezuela Sanctions**

**Mr. President,**

Dominica continues to stand with the overwhelming majority of the international community in calling for the removal of the 60-year old economic blockade imposed on the Republic of Cuba by the United States.

In November of 2022, this body voted overwhelmingly (185 to 2) condemning the embargo; even Ukraine, Mr. President, could not bring itself to support the United States in this outdated and unjust measure and abstained from voting.

This body must continue to condemn this egregious violation until it is lifted, as it has severely impacted the lives and livelihoods of the ordinary Cuban citizen for the last six (6) decades.

Additionally, the inclusion of that country on the US State Department's unilateral list of State Sponsors of Terrorism, are all unjustified.

**Furthermore Mr. President,**

My delegation supports the lifting of sanctions on the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This hegemonic situation constitutes a violation of the Human Rights of the Venezuelan People.

We therefore stand in solidarity with the Government and People of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and look forward to a complete lifting of all such sanctions thus allowing for the realization of the great potential

for the rapid socio-economic development of this great Nation.

### **Disasters in Morocco and Libya**

Finally, Mr. President, as one of the more vulnerable small island states which was devastated in 2015 by Tropical Storm Erika resulting in significant loss of life and the loss of over 90 percent of GDP and was again struck by Hurricane Maria in 2017, resulting in the loss of 226 percent of GDP, we empathize with the Government and people of the Kingdom of Morocco, who were struck by a 6.8 magnitude earthquake on September 8, resulting in over 3000 deaths and twice as many injuries and the complete devastation of several communities.



Similarly, Dominica empathizes with the Government and people of Libya who experienced flooding of biblical proportions resulting in the loss of more than 20,000 lives, with thousands of citizens still unaccounted for according to UN reports, and incalculable devastation in terms of infrastructure and built heritage.

We welcome the responses of neighbouring countries and the international community to these catastrophes in both of these North African countries and urge even greater response in line with the magnitude of these natural disasters.

**Mr. President,**

I end by calling on all member states of this United Nations to recommit ourselves to this organisation as an instrument of

our joint obligation to the global community and I wish you and all delegates to this 78<sup>th</sup> Session every success during these deliberations.

I thank you.