

**Draft Statement by Dr. The Hon. Terrance M. Drew
Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis
At the General Debate of the
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New York, 23 September 2023**

“Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all.”

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

It is my honour, in this my second year as the Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis, to join with members of the global family of nations and speak on behalf of the people of St. Kitts and Nevis, at home and in the diaspora.

I must first extend condolences to people across the world, who in a summer of scorching heat, the hottest in recorded human history, suffered every disaster known to humanity - fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and with them untold personal, social and economic tr. I especially extend the heartfelt pain of the people of St Kitts

and Nevis, at the recent disasters in Libya and Morocco. We in St. Kitts and Nevis are suffering the worst drought of our history resulting in severe water shortage.

Mr. President, I extend my sincere congratulations to you, on your election as President of this 78th Session of the General Assembly. Your election has given pride and satisfaction to St. Kitts and Nevis and indeed the Caribbean Community, and it stands as further testimony to the fact that small island developing states can contribute to positions of global leadership.

Your term comes at a time of international complexity and conflict; of great global tensions and even greater global aspirations; of new geopolitical dynamics and even newer technologies, which are transforming every aspect of life as we know it. These are times of great divide in income and wellbeing, combined with such growing insularity and loss of trust, that it shouts the need for what Secretary General Guterres has rightly identified as, “the centrality of prevention, coordination and partnership.” St. Kitts and Nevis shares the view that this must be a period of prevention of the greatest “downward slide” socially, economically, environmentally, and of security, for the people of the world.

Towards a More Caring Inclusive and Beneficial Multilateralism

Mr. President,

There exists an alarming lack of trust the world over – lack of trust in state and global organizations, lack of trust in the traditional media and what some regard as its management and manipulation of information and, Mr. President, a lack of trust in the political class.

In a world of distrust, the United Nations and its member-states must show a sense of caring, inclusion, respect for the dignity of all to ensure “We, the Peoples,” is a statement of unity and a clarion call for the word “common” to be truly reflected in how we view the global commons and how we together achieve the agenda for the common good.

If we are to rebuild trust and re-ignite global solidarity, leaders, particularly those in wealthier countries, must mean what they say and say what they mean. Developing countries are groaning under the weight of burgeoning challenges not of their own making, and I would daresay, some of which were inherited as a result of colonization and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Millions of Africans were uprooted from their homelands and transported across the Atlantic in the hulls of ships to be

enslaved on plantations. This was the largest forced migration in human history, and it resulted in great wealth for some at the expense of the lives and dehumanization of African peoples. It must be noted that compensation was paid to the plantation owners, while the survivors of this crime against humanity were left in suffering and were hindered in their socio-economic development. Thus, it is past time for reparatory justice. I encourage all to work together constructively and as partners in the pursuit of, and respect for justice, for As Martin Luther King said, the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.

The climate challenge must continue to be highlighted .The industrial, behemoth countries and companies, push SIDS and others to the front lines of climate change. They accept little responsibility for financing the adaptation and mitigation measures necessary for the survival of developing countries which suffer the consequences of the lifestyles and industries of others. Consequently, countries like mine, which are unable to access concessionary funding, are forced to fix the climate crisis by obtaining loans at exorbitant rates from the very countries where the problem originated. Our carbon footprint is very small, yet we face the existential threat of climate change, this is unjust, we therefore call for climate justice.

Mr. President,

There is an urgent need for the international community to address the gaps and shortfalls of the current international financial architecture, with a view to strengthening support for SIDS, in particular, through a multilateral sovereign debt mechanism, meaningful reform of the governance of the international financial institutions and enhanced access to financial resources. I congratulate the World Bank on recent steps in the right direction, however, there is still much ground to cover if states like mine are not to fail and our economies and societies are to remain viable. I commend the Bridgetown Initiative of my sister, Prime Minister Mia Mottley, as having the potential to effect the kind of changes that are essential to ensure equitable growth and sustainable development.

I see as an outcome to addressing the issue of access to capital, the development of a relevant and effective Multidimensional Vulnerability Index. I would like to caution however, that to be effective, debt must be part of the metrics used for assessment and ranking of countries. Further, the risk and cost of wipe-out environmental events, those which in a single event or series of events literally “wipe out” 5% of GDP or more, as well as the capacity to recover from such events, are all important metrics if the MVI is to work.

St Kitts and Nevis - Sustainable Island State

Mr President,

At the national level, my government has commenced efforts to further ensure the holistic and resilient development of our communities. This undertaking is articulated in our vision to transform our country into a Sustainable Island State by 2040 and demonstrates the determination with which we take ownership of our own destiny and pursue our sustainable development aspirations. Our vision is buttressed by seven pillars: food security, green energy transition; economic diversification; sustainable industries; the orange economy; COVID-19 recovery and social protection. These overarching areas include environmental sustainability; sustainable lives and livelihoods; health and wellness and fiscal and debt resilience.

To this end we have made strides toward geothermal energy production and utilized loans from the Caribbean Development Bank for this national development project, along with collaboration with the Atlantic Council and the PACC30 initiative. Health care delivery and management have been strengthened; we have learnt the lessons of the pandemic and are now better prepared for crises in health even though more work is needed.

We are also building more open transparent and participatory governance structures, as demonstrated by the passing into law the integrity in public

life and good governance legislations. We have also developed programs for the most vulnerable and marginalized, specifically women, youth, the elderly, the disabled, and the Rastafarian community. We want to ensure that St. Kitts and Nevis leaves no one behind.

Mr. President, we aspire to create a society where our people can live in safety and security. However, we are plagued by the scourge that is the proliferation of illicit and untraceable weapons flowing into our region. States that manufacture these weapons must take greater responsibility to combat the illegal flows that pose a grave threat to our national and regional security and stability, and have devastating socio-economic consequences. We cannot win this fight against the guns on our own. International cooperation is necessary if we are to ensure the protection of our societies and our people. To this end, we thank the United States for increasing its collaboration to deal with the illicit transshipment of guns and to buttress our overall national security apparatus. We must continue to work together to ensure continued success in this regard.

Global Inequities

Mr. President,

It is of great concern that glaring global inequities persist and are growing wider, despite the sustained calls for global solidarity, action and cooperation. For example, Venezuela has been placed in a precarious situation as a result of the application of sanctions, and its people continue to bear the brunt of these unilateral measures. We therefore strongly urge constructive dialogue between the Governments of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the United States, to relieve the hardships these impositions have caused the Venezuelan people. Further, it ought to be noted that while others benefit from access to Venezuela's natural resources, its Caribbean neighbors are denied as a result of these sanctions.

Continuing with inequities and the need for respect of sovereign states, Cuba which has been a generous global partner, is caught in the clutches of an unjust and continuing economic, commercial and financial embargo, which has caused suffering on a people who do not deserve it. The people of St Kitts and Nevis stand in solidarity with the government and people of Cuba and call for the immediate ending of the embargo and the removal of Cuba from the unilateral List of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

Speaking to the issue of governments and peoples who are excluded from full participation within the United Nations and the global multilateral systems, I recall the situation of Taiwan, Taiwan has proven itself to be a

reliable development partner, which greatly contributes to collective efforts to address the pressing global issues of today. It is our firm belief that Taiwan should be able to make its contribution to the work and budget of multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and the World Health Assembly in furtherance of common global goals, and it is our hope that the right of its 23 million people to adequate representation can be realized. Moreover, we urge for peace in that region as war would lead to severe consequences for all of us.

Closer home, Mr. President,

The ongoing dire situation in our sister nation, Haiti, demands the sustained attention and support of the international community. Haiti, the first free black republic in the Western Hemisphere, continues to grapple with an unimaginable scale of human suffering. A political resolution is urgently needed, while also recognizing that appropriate measures must be taken to reverse Haiti's legacy of underdevelopment.

We cannot move forward on the acceleration of Agenda 2030 if we continue to knowingly and deliberately leave some people behind.

Reform of the UN Security Council

Mr. President,

We are living in a world in flux, where new emerging poles and spheres of influence are challenging the existing so-called “rules-based order”. New currencies are being internationalized, new trade routes are taking shape and new security, political and economic blocs are emerging to drive geopolitical advantage. The voice of the Global South is growing bolder with increasingly louder rumblings among powerful blocs calling for change. The need for an enhanced role and presence of developing countries from the Global South within the UN Security Council could not be more compelling, and we are convinced that in the face of these complex changes, the reform of the Security Council is necessary to better reflect contemporary geopolitical realities and enhance its effectiveness.

Conclusion

This reform is critical as we assemble today at a time that is as challenging as it is exciting. We stand at the juncture of “what is” and “what could be.” We know what is. We understand what could be. Ours is the challenge to ensure peace, prosperity, progress, and sustainability for all. St. Kitts

and Nevis accepts the challenge and remains a ready and willing partner in our collective quest for a better world that we all deserve.

Mr. President, I thank you.