



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

BY THE

HONOURABLE SEYMOUR MULLINGS, MP,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND FOREIGN TRADE

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Mr. President,

Let me begin by joining the previous speakers in extending my personal congratulations and those of my delegation on your election to the presidency of the 53rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. You assume the leadership of this Assembly at a time when the global agenda demands much of all of us. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of the Jamaican delegation as you guide the work of this Assembly to what I am confident will be a successful conclusion.

I wish also to thank His Excellency Hennadiy Udovenko of the Ukraine for the effective manner in which he discharged his responsibilities as President of the Assembly during his tenure.

Mr. President, the Secretary-General deserves our praise for his outstanding leadership of the Organisation during the past year. I congratulate him in particular on the successes achieved through the quiet methods of preventive diplomacy, which he employed on sensitive issues affecting international peace and security.

We welcome his Report, which contains a thoughtful overview of the complex challenges facing the international community and applaud the institutional reforms so far introduced which have sought to bring greater coherence and efficiency to the work of the United Nations. We also endorse the re-organisation of the work programme which brings renewed focus to the initiatives of central importance to the United Nations: those in the areas of peace and security,

development cooperation, social development and humanitarian affairs.

We consider it essential that the membership of the UN support the efforts of the Secretary-General in the implementation of this programme of work. Such support should be extended not only by endorsement of the range of activities being undertaken in fulfilment of our mandates, but also through the regular commitment of resources for their execution.

Mr. President, our presence here is recognition of the universality of many of the problems which we face, and our membership in this Organization is demonstration of our conviction that these problems are best solved through collective action. This should lead us to reaffirm our support for multilateralism and our respect for its processes through the timely payment, without preconditions, of our assessed contributions to the respective United Nations' bodies.

Mr. President, in recent years the international community has witnessed a disturbing increase in the number of conflicts within and between states. The stable peace anticipated from the ending of the Cold War has been elusive. We instead have watched as efforts to resolve ongoing regional disputes unravel because of obduracy, mistrust and hostility. We have watched as intolerance and hatred have divided communities and fueled conflict across the continents. We are concerned that despite the intervention of the Secretary-General, his envoys and the membership of the UN there is still no

real progress toward peace in a number of long-standing disputes. We share the concern of the international community that the peace process in the Middle East has been stalled, and we are disappointed that there is still no substantial progress on the long outstanding problem in Cyprus. Hostilities in Afghanistan continue unabated; civil wars still rage in Sudan and Angola and violence in Kosovo has escalated. New complications have arisen to increase instability and conflict in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa.

Mr. President, these unresolved conflicts undermine the political, economic and social fabric of the states concerned, bringing destruction and untold human suffering to the victims of war. We cannot afford to drift into complacency while increasing numbers of the world's population are destroyed, dispossessed and despoiled by war. In the face of this, we should strengthen our resolve to stand against aggression, and the use of force, and to support the resolution of disputes and conflicts through negotiated settlements.

We encourage member states to support the Secretary-General's initiative for the strengthening of the United Nations' capability to deal with conflict resolution, prevention and early warning. I also wish to use this opportunity to commend the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces for the great contribution which they continue to make to the maintenance of peace, notwithstanding the difficult circumstances in which they work.

We are deeply distressed at the increasing acts of violence directed against international peacekeeping personnel. I wish to pay special tribute to these volunteers for their sacrifice, some giving their lives, in the cause of peace.

Mr. President, the Charter of the United Nations invests in the Security Council the principal authority for decision-making in matters affecting international peace and security. We are, therefore, concerned at the tendency of states to take unilateral action which they deem to be in their national interest, in situations of conflict with other nations. Jamaica reaffirms its confidence in the principle of collective security, on which the role of the Security Council is predicated.

It is also important that the actions of the Council inspire confidence and that there be greater openness and transparency in its working methods. We believe that, like any other international body, the Security Council should undergo a process of democratic reform if it is effectively to meet the new challenges of an ever-changing world.

We are committed to working as equal partners with the rest of the international community to strengthen the capacity of the Security Council to respond to the needs of member states in matters of peace and security. It is to that end, Mr. President, that my Government has presented its candidature for a non permanent seat on the Council for the period 2000-2001.

Mr. President, my government attaches

importance to the fact that the long-awaited International Criminal Court, which the Secretary-General described as the missing link in the international legal system, has now been constituted by an internationally agreed Statute. We commend the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for taking the initiative in calling for its establishment. That institution will provide a framework for the legal expression of international opposition to the terrible crimes being perpetrated against humanity which the United Nations had not been able to address effectively.

Mr. President, this year the international community celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As we commemorate this important milestone, we should reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of tolerance, peace and understanding for all peoples. Let us also demonstrate mutual respect for each other's right to self-determination, including the right to choose one's own path for achieving national goals, and the right to sustainable development.

There can be no doubt that peace and security are prerequisites for the attainment of sustainable development. It is equally true, however, that where there is economic and social deprivation, there can be no real peace.

Jamaica therefore strongly endorses the right to development as an integral part of fundamental human rights, and underscores the important contribution which realisation of this right would make to the fuller enjoyment of human

rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on progress being made in the elaboration of a strategy for the implementation and promotion of the right to development.

Mr. President, we continue to look to the United Nations system for support of our development agenda, which goes beyond our effort to gain fair access to international markets and to secure a just and equitable share of global prosperity.

Central to improving the welfare of our people must be measures to alleviate and ultimately eradicate poverty; and to promote environmental protection and sustainable development. We need to strengthen our institutional framework for capacity building and we need to invest in development of our human resource.

This is our people-centred vision for development, and in order to make reality of this vision we recognise the need to continue to devise and implement public policies which ensure that the gains from economic growth and development are equitably distributed throughout society.

This challenge of good governance demands that there be institutional infrastructure which promotes transparency and accountability in public administration; that ensures the effective management of fiscal and monetary policies; that protects the integrity of judicial and law enforcement systems.

Mr. President, a crucial component of our economic and social transformation is the development of our human resources. Jamaica

supports the view that sustainable development cannot be achieved without sustained human development. Indeed, the pivotal importance of our human resource to the development process was reaffirmed by the CARICOM Member States in the Declaration of Montego Bay adopted in 1997.

We in the Caribbean region stand firmly committed to:

1. Nurturing the development of each person's potential without regard to gender;

2. Developing a culture of entrepreneurship;

3. Research and development as a way of life and as a means to improving production; and

4. Improving the competitiveness of those industries on which our economies are based.

We look to the international community to support these aspirations.

In this regard, Jamaica welcomes the Secretary-General's proposed initiatives to strengthen the international framework for human development. We agree that it would be useful to convene global and regional seminars exploring ways to advance human resource development and institution building in preparation for the Millennium Assembly in the year 2000.

The issue of sustainable development for small island developing states is of particular importance to Jamaica. It speaks to the very survival of a group of

island states whose economic viability and developmental aspirations are inextricably linked to the carrying capacity of the fragile ecosystems in which these nations make their home. I speak of the ecologically vulnerable islands and low-lying coastal states of the Caribbean which are continually subject to the pressures of urbanisation and resource exploitation; to the pollution of their coastal waters; to the threat of natural disasters. We are endangered by the threat of sea-level rise and face the destruction of our coral reefs.

The danger posed by natural disasters was most recently demonstrated by Hurricane Georges which wreaked destruction through the Caribbean causing widespread loss of life and property in Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Saint Kitts and Nevis. We take this opportunity to appeal to the international community to provide urgent and generous humanitarian assistance and support for the reconstruction of our sister Caribbean states. Jamaica welcomes the ongoing effort of the United Nations to develop economic and ecological vulnerability indices for small island developing states and will be monitoring closely the outcome of this work.

The success of the SIDS initiative will depend on the negotiation of favourable agreements among national stakeholders and on the forging of effective partnerships with donor countries. Jamaica, therefore, looks forward to the convening of the Special Session for the Review of the Global Conference on

the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1999, which provides an opportunity for real progress to be made through the commitment of financial resources.

What we need now is an action-oriented follow-up programme to take our economies into the 21st Century.

Mr. President, Jamaica is a strong advocate of multilateralism and believes that measures available within the multilateral framework should be employed to assist developing countries to benefit meaningfully from the process of globalization.

We note that while this process holds much promise for growth and prosperity, it also poses serious challenges for developing countries, many of which are being increasingly marginalized.

The reality is that the globalization process is heightening patterns of uneven development among developed and developing countries, and it is already very clear that there is no globalisation of benefits.

The plight of developing countries in the wake of the financial crisis currently affecting the global economy is made even more grim when we take into account the decline in concessionary financial flows from the donor community which we have witnessed in recent years. Official Development Assistance (ODA) represents today only an average 0.22% of the GNP of developed countries, a far cry from the target of 0.7% set in 1972. The share of official development

assistance in net resource flows to developing countries fell from 64% in 1994 to 22% in 1996.

Taken with the heavy burden of debt service payments which must be met, we are faced with the unhappy circumstance of net reverse flows from the South to the North, at a time when additional resources are needed to address the challenges which attend the globalisation process.

Mr. President, these trends must be reversed if developing countries are to have a fair opportunity to achieve meaningful development. For the success of the development process is dependent on the availability of external financing, and concessionary resource flows play a significant role in the maintenance of economic stability, the development of infrastructure and capacity building which are prerequisites for effective participation in the globalisation process.

Mr. President, Jamaica considers that the time has come for us to address these issues in serious dialogue. There is an urgent need to identify ways in which development financing from industrialized to developing and transition economies for both public and private sector enterprise may be increased. We must explore measures to relieve the external debt of the developing countries, including the cancellation of debt. We should seek to have dialogue between creditor and debtor countries to ensure an increase in the flow of concessionary financing in support of economic reforms, poverty eradication

and the achievement of sustainable development.

We therefore join the call for the urgent convening of a Conference on Financing for Development at an early date. Crucial issues which we would wish to see discussed at such a meeting are:

- *strategies for mobilising domestic resources for development;*
- *mobilisation of international private financial flows;*
- *international financial cooperation for development;*
- *debt relief; and*
- *trade facilitation for development*

Mr. President, beyond this proposed conference, my Government recognizes that there is need for ongoing exchange between the North and the South. While the days of the ideological divide and political polarization are behind us, we are still faced with the challenge of North/South disparity in development and opportunity. We need to foster increased collaboration between the developed and developing world; to identify ways in which wider cooperation on issues concerning trade and investment, debt and development may be pursued.

We consider that a process of dialogue on these issues could be initiated by a representative group of developing and transition economies in consultation with the major industrialized countries. We believe, Mr. President, that such a process of dialogue would pave the way for a broader framework of functional

cooperation in areas of interest to both North and South.

It is with much satisfaction that Jamaica assumes the Chairmanship of the Group of 15 developing states, and we look forward to hosting the Ninth Ministerial Meeting in Kingston in February next year. Jamaica, during its tenure, will seek to ensure that developing countries play a more active role in shaping the international economy so as to promote greater balance and equity.

Mr. President, my Government remains deeply concerned at the impact of the ever-expanding illicit drug trade, which is not only a menace to civil society, but also undermines the economic viability of our countries. The extraordinary demand for and supply of illicit drugs for this lucrative trade has resulted in the formation of transnational networks, including highly sophisticated money laundering operations. Of even greater concern is the now well-established link between the drug trade and the proliferation of small arms. The ready availability of small arms has intensified the cycle of crime and violence in our societies.

The Special Session of the General Assembly on the World Drug Problem held earlier this year underscored the need to strengthen the process of bilateral, regional and international cooperation in the fight against illicit drug activities. These initiatives should also deal simultaneously with the related problem of small arms. Jamaica calls on the international community to fully support these efforts.

Mr. President, Jamaica joins in condemning the acts of

terrorism committed in Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi during August. We support the adoption of a multilateral approach as the most effective means of removing this threat to the security of the international community.

Mr. President, Caribbean states recognize the ocean as a symbol of the common heritage of mankind; a vital resource which should be managed in a responsible manner so as to ensure its continued use for present and future generations. Caribbean Governments are committed to the protection of the Caribbean Sea, our shared patrimony. We have recently taken a decision to develop and implement a comprehensive coastal zone management programme by the year 2000. We continue to be concerned at the threat to the fragile marine environment posed by the regular shipment of nuclear and hazardous waste through the Caribbean Sea.

Jamaica commends the Government of Portugal for its initiative in establishing the Independent World Commission on the Oceans, on which an eminent Jamaican served. As part of its recognition of the International Year of the Oceans, the Government of Jamaica has established a National Council on Ocean and Coastal Zone Management to promote the sustainable development and use of our marine resources.

The International Seabed Authority, which has its headquarters in Kingston, continues to make progress on the negotiation of a Mining Code. It is hoped that these negotiations will be finalized at an early date, so that a regulatory regime

for the resources of the seabed may be firmly established. We call on member states to participate more actively in these negotiations in order to ensure that the Code which is developed will protect the interests of all countries. We also urge member states to support the operation of the Authority through the commitment of resources.

Mr. President, it has not escaped our attention that so many of the preceding speakers have made reference to the need for the promotion of international peace, human security and sustainable development. As we move towards the end of an era, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that we do not face the dawn of the new millennium burdened by the weight of unresolved issues which impede the development of our community of nations and which undermine the well-being of our peoples.

Clearly, it is in our individual and collective interest to participate fully in the process for development and peace, for after all, Mr. President, the character of the global village of the future will ultimately be determined by the quality of the input that each of us invests today.