



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 57TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

STATEMENT BY

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FINAL TEXT

Mr. President

On behalf of the delegation of Jamaica, I extend congratulations to you on your assumption of the Presidency of this 57th Session of the General Assembly. We pledge our full cooperation with you in the work of the Session. We also express our deep gratitude to the outgoing President, H.E. Mr. Han Seung-soo, under whose guidance the 56th Session was successfully completed.

Jamaica welcomes the Confederation of Switzerland as a member of the family of the United Nations and we look forward to welcoming East Timor when it assumes membership of the Organization later during this Session.

Mr. President

Forty years ago on this day, September 18, Jamaica joined the family of the United Nations as its 106th member. It was one of the first foreign policy initiatives taken on achieving independence. In taking this step, Jamaica signaled its readiness to assume its obligations as a member of the international community, to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the promotion of economic and social progress through multilateral cooperation within the UN system. Today, on our fortieth anniversary, Jamaica reaffirms its faith in the United Nations and proclaims its unwavering commitment to multilateralism.

Over its forty years, Jamaica played its part by active participation in the process of widening the reach of the United Nations into a range of activities and programmes critical to global development and world peace. Our policy is to support the strengthening of the United Nations system and to uphold its moral authority. In a world of many nations with diverse interests and great disparities in wealth and military power, it is an indispensable instrument in the promotion of the rule of law in international affairs and for the peaceful settlement of disputes. With the changing nature and growing complexity of international affairs, especially in the context of globalization and with the emergence of new challenges to peace and security, the fulfillment of the role of the UN remains critical. It is now more than ever that we need to strengthen the structures and institutions of the international system to safeguard our common interests in achieving a global order of peace and economic and social progress for all.

Mr. President

Over the past year, dramatic events have occurred which have brought old and new issues to the forefront of attention. We recall the shock and horror of the terrorist attacks of September 11; the ensuing war in Afghanistan; the outbreak of renewed violence in the Middle East between Israelis and Palestinians; the escalation of old tensions in South Asia; and more recently, the threat of a new war in Iraq. All of these were given special attention by the Secretary General in the presentation of his Report to the General Assembly last Thursday. Jamaica commends the Secretary General for the clarity of his vision on the role of the United Nations in the resolution of current global problems

Of high importance on the agenda for immediate action is the situation in the Middle East where recently we have witnessed so much death, destruction and human suffering, particularly among civilians. It should now be clear that the only true way to find peace and security is through laying the foundations for a just and durable settlement. What is needed now is a plan to move the process forward towards the convening of a peace conference. There has emerged a significant level of consensus on the main elements of a settlement – the withdrawal of Israel from occupied Palestinian territory; the exercise of self-determination for the Palestinian people and the establishment of arrangements for the two states of Israel and Palestine to co-exist within clearly defined and internationally recognized boundaries. We believe it is important and urgent that advantage is taken of the present situation of relative calm to proceed towards negotiations involving the leadership of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority.

With regard to Iraq, which has been the subject of so much debate in recent weeks, it is up to the Security Council to carry out its responsibilities in a manner broadly acceptable to the international community and to preclude unilateral actions which could lead to unpredictable consequences and to wider instability in the region. This is an important moment for the United Nations and we expect the Security Council to act in accordance with the Charter to safeguard the integrity of the international system and ensure the maintenance of peace.

Mr. President

To make the world a safer place requires measures to be adopted on a broad front. The elimination of terrorism is a task requiring cooperation of the entire international community. The comprehensive measures set out in Security Council Resolution 1373 establishes the framework for action and Jamaica is doing its part in that effort. At the same time, it should be recognized that for achievement of the long-term objectives, it is necessary to address the root causes of terrorism in their political, economic, social and psychological dimensions. It is also important that in the campaign against terrorism there be no targeting or stigmatizing of particular ethnic groups or religious communities; nor should it become the basis for intolerance, persecution or discrimination against minority groups or the violation of human rights.

Linked to the question of terrorism are security problems arising from the continued growth in the illicit trade in narcotics and the illicit transfer of guns and other weapons which have become inseparable elements in the operations of transnational crime. This is particularly the case in the Caribbean where this phenomenon has assumed alarming new proportions in the era of globalization. A growing network of illicit trade has developed in drugs and weapons which is subverting the internal security of our Caribbean states and threatening social stability. We acknowledge ongoing efforts at the regional and bilateral levels to address these security concerns but more needs to be done, particularly in regulating, monitoring and reporting transfers in small arms in jurisdictions in which these weapons are produced.

Mr. President

These are some of the negative features which accompany globalisation which add to the problems facing developing countries. The globalisation of trade, finance and the means of production presents even greater challenges. The contraction of ODA and FDI flows and the volatility in short-term capital have resulted over time in declining growth rates and increasing poverty, widening the gap between rich and poor countries. The opportunities for economic growth and prosperity promised by globalisation have therefore not materialised for the majority. Instead, developing countries have been placed in peril in a system in which survival will remain an uphill struggle against dislocation and marginalisation. Without some arrangement to promote greater equity in the sharing of the benefits of globalisation, we will witness a pattern of continued enrichment of only those endowed with the resources, capital stocks and technology, who can reap the advantages of competitiveness.

In this context, the very important forums held during the past year, which sought to advance the development agenda, were therefore both timely and welcome.

At Doha last November, there was some acknowledgement of the wide differences in levels of development and capacity of states, and the consequential need for special and differential treatment for developing countries. We look forward to having these principles incorporated into the architecture of WTO rules. This, for us, would be an important step in pursuing a development dimension within the trade agenda. Since trade is the engine of development, then it is vital that real opportunities be made available in export markets for developing country products, without the barriers, in various forms, which continue to hamper market access and restrict the expansion of exports.

There should also be significant strengthening of productive capacity through new investment and capital transfers to developing countries. At Monterrey in March, we sought to put in place a framework for the more effective mobilization of resources for development from many critical sources. Some indications were given of ODA increases which we welcome although these still fall below the agreed targets. In the absence of a system of global governance that would assure equity in investment opportunity and protection from the volatility of private financial flows, official sources of finance remain a critical form of development assistance. It is therefore important that these new resources are made available to achieve concrete results without the complications of conditionalities and selective processing.

As we pursue implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Agenda, we also look forward to progress in the democratization of the decision-making process within the international system for finance and trade. For it is only when developing countries are accorded fair space and an effective voice in the setting of international finance and trade policies that we will begin to see greater equity in the distribution of the world's wealth.

Most recently in Johannesburg, we embraced a new opportunity to advance the sustainable development agenda by furthering progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. We welcome the important new targets agreed, which give fuller expression to the commitment of the international community to the Millennium Development Goals. The real test will be to see whether the commitments are translated into action through the mobilization of resources to meet the requirements of the programme and the targets that have been set. Johannesburg is thus the climax of an important year that reshaped and refocused the development priorities of the global community for the new millennium. For sustainable development will not be achieved without financing for development, nor without a development agenda in trade.

Jamaica welcomes in particular the commitments made at Johannesburg in respect of small island developing states. We continue to underscore the need for special attention to be paid to the challenges of vulnerability faced by the SIDs. What is needed is a fair opportunity to secure the welfare of our people, and to protect our fragile environment.

This cannot be achieved without the full support of the international community. The Barbados Programme of Action, adopted in 1994 represented that commitment of support. As we now prepare to review its implementation in 2004, we encourage renewed engagement on those issues critical to our very survival, such as the dangers posed by global warming, sea level rise and natural disasters.

Mr. President

Jamaica welcomes the positive indications for Africa where the reduction of political conflict and turmoil offers a real opportunity for building stability and economic progress. Africa has suffered for far too long from a myriad of difficult problems and should be given a new start. The formation of the African Union and the inauguration of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) are commendable initiatives to bring Africa closer to the mainstream of international development, to contain the AIDS pandemic and to combat the spread of poverty. What are really needed now are resources and we urge that every effort be made to ensure that the new initiatives achieve a breakthrough for African development.

In the field of social development and human rights, the United Nations has made significant achievements in extending and promoting the rights of persons in vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Notwithstanding these achievements, the Organization is faced with growing social challenges, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic which threaten to reverse decades of progress in many parts of the world. Concerted action to control the spread of this disease should remain a priority of the Organization. So too should be the protection of the rights of children. The specific time-bound targets adopted during the Special Session require our unequivocal commitment.

Mr. President

One of the important areas of contribution of the United Nations is in the development of international law as a means of promoting universally accepted rules, and the creation of multilateral legal regimes to achieve common goals. The most recent achievement is the Rome Statute on the International Criminal Court (ICC) which came into force in July. Another outstanding example is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This year, the international community will be observing the 20th Anniversary of its signature which took place at Montego Bay, Jamaica on December 10, 1982. The immense significance of this Convention in safeguarding the interests of all countries in exploitation of ocean resources and in maritime issues has been widely acknowledged. We applaud the work being carried out by the two institutions which have evolved out of the Convention - the International Seabed Authority (ISA) which is entrusted with the implementation of the concept of the common heritage of mankind and the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea as the forum for resolving maritime disputes under the Convention.

This is a good example of the result of working together to arrive at common solutions through a multilateral process to advance the common interest. It shows that the United Nations is working. We should safeguard and strengthen it as the guardian of our common future.

Thank you, Mr. President.