



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement

by the

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade
Senator the Honourable Anthony Hylton

at the

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Madam President

It is an honour for me to address the 61st Session of the General Assembly on behalf of my country Jamaica.

I congratulate you on your election as President of this Assembly. It is an added pleasure for me today to recognize your assumption to the Presidency, being one of only three women in the history of the General Assembly to assume this position, and significantly, the first since 1969 - nearly 40 years.

I also take this opportunity, to express deep appreciation for the work carried out during the 60th Session of the Assembly by Mr. Jan Eliasson under whose leadership so much was accomplished in an extraordinarily challenging year, notably, the adoption of the World Summit Outcome Document.

Madam President

As we begin this new United Nations year we ask ourselves, what is the state of our world? We ask this particularly in the context of the determinations and resolutions of our Leaders in 2005 to urgently address the storm clouds which were overwhelming the vast majority of humankind, particularly in the developing world. We see a continued challenging time for development; for peace and security; for democracy and social institutions and for multilateralism. We see an environment in which the credibility of the international system to deliver fairly and equitably is being increasingly questioned.

These were the very issues and circumstances which world leaders sought to address at the beginning of the 60th Session in 2005. Their Summit Outcome Document contained a raft of resolutions, commitments and recommendations to deal with the fundamental issues and constraints and was intended to give political momentum to achieving the commonly agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The Leaders, while recognizing that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing reaffirmed that development is a central goal by itself. Jamaica remains deeply committed to the three pillars of the United Nations but with development as the very core. It is for this reason that Jamaica is concerned that we have not discerned any significant focus on implementation in the area of development over the last year – a year dedicated to implementation. The implementation gap has been greater in this area than in any of the other two areas.

Madam President

There has been increased, but still insufficient, attention to those who live in extreme poverty – note extreme poverty or living on less than one dollar per day.

The Secretary-General has cited some startling statistics in his report on the Organization to this General Assembly. I refer to two. Ten million children die before their 5th birthday; and women in developing countries are 45 times more likely to die during pregnancy than women in developed countries. Irrefutable evidence that the situation remains absolutely and comparatively very unsatisfactory and unsustainable in an interdependent world.

Madam President,

Jamaica and other developing countries have consistently argued in all the debates leading up to and during the 2005 Summit that, in addition to the poorest countries, the situation of vulnerable middle and lower middle income countries, especially small island and highly externally dependent economies needed to be addressed. A number of potentially very useful provisions were incorporated into the Summit Outcome Document to address their particular circumstances. But, frankly, Jamaica has seen little resolve on the part of the international community to implement those commitments. We have seen no work for example, to:

- 1) implement the commitment to support the development efforts of middle income developing countries to help them meet, *inter alia*, their financial, technical and technological requirements;
- 2) develop any framework to provide significant debt relief or restructuring for middle income developing countries with unsustainable debt burdens that are not part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, as well as to comprehensively address the debt problems of those countries;
- 3) implement the development dimension of the DOHA Work Programme, in particular the work programme for smaller economies in the World Trade Organization.

We recognize that there was a welcome increase in ODA, from US\$69 million in 2003 to US\$106 million in 2005. Much of this additional funding was targeted to a small number of admittedly very deserving countries mainly for debt relief and to peacekeeping. There was little new money for investment in development projects even in the poorest countries.

Madam President

It was always recognized that much of the resources for financing development must come from trade. This was clearly stated in the Monterrey Consensus and repeated in the 2005 Summit Outcome Document. In the Outcome Document, leaders of developed and developing countries committed to work expeditiously towards implementing the development dimensions of the DOHA Work Programme. They also emphasized the need to address the weak and volatile commodity prices and support the efforts of commodity dependent countries, to restructure, diversify and strengthen the competitiveness of their commodity sectors.

Instead of expedition and facilitation, we have had stalemate and a breakdown in the DOHA round of negotiations. Perhaps even more significant is that in the negotiations that did take place, the development dimension, especially as this relates to the small and vulnerable economies such as Jamaica, was conspicuously absent from the debate. These issues must be addressed in any effort to restart the negotiation.

Jamaica strongly supports the view that fundamental to a viable and equitable trade regime is the need to take account of the wide disparity in structural characteristics and approaches to economic policy among the many members of the WTO, and the consequent need for flexibility. We would add, for clarity, the need to include the differences in levels of development among the economies and the asymmetries that exist between developed and developing countries.

As a small country with a debt burden of over 125% of GDP; a country whose exports have been falling in value and whose markets are threatened by the current uncritical approach to globalization and trade liberalization; a country dependent on imported petroleum for over 90 percent of its commercial energy and whose energy bill was over one billion United States dollars in 2005; an island vulnerable to a range of natural hazards and still working to recover from major hurricanes and droughts in 2004 and 2005; a country whose skilled professionals - doctors, nurses, teachers and scientists, in particular are targeted by some major developed countries, Jamaica understands the need for a collaborative and facilitative international environment and for coherence in policies. Successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals cannot be assured in the face of these challenges.

Madam President,

Jamaica recognizes that there can be no development, no poverty eradication, no lasting peace without the advancement, equality and empowerment of women. Women's advancement is a priority in our national policy and we support all international initiatives towards that end.

We are encouraged by action towards implementing some mandates of the 2005 Summit. In international peace and security - the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission with emphasis on addressing post-conflict situations. Jamaica has the honour to be a founding member of this body and will be actively involved in the achievement of its objectives; In human rights - the establishment of the Human Rights Council; In humanitarian affairs - the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund and agreement on the protection of humanitarian personnel.

We welcome the finalization of the draft convention aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of disabled persons and look forward to its formal adoption later this year. We welcome also the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted by the High Level Review Meeting on HIV/AIDS. We urge the full implementation of those decisions to comprehensively tackle this scourge in the most seriously affected countries and regions. For the Caribbean region, HIV/AIDS is a major human, social and economic challenge.

Madam President,

The recent High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, convened in keeping with the mandate of the 2005 World Summit, and the publication of the UNFPA 2006 State of the World Population Report have been very timely. They have highlighted, *inter alia*, the multi-dimensional nature of international migration, its importance in the globalization process and the potential for further widening the development gap between rich and poor countries. They have raised a number of critical issues for the attention of the international community. Jamaica is particularly concerned with the selectivity in the policies of developed countries, their deliberate targeting of critical skilled professionals of developing countries while tightening their general immigration laws against the unskilled and the young, and their systematic and wholesale repatriation of those who run into difficulty with their laws - especially hardened criminals, many of whom have little or no current connection, if they ever did, with the receiving developing country. These policies are inconsistent, counter-productive and, *with* all due respect frankly wrong. They demand the urgent attention of the international community. We look forward to these issues being studied and given the required attention at the follow-up meeting in Belgium in March 2007.

Madam President,

We note the continued emphasis on strengthening of the United Nations and the adoption of reform measures aimed at improving accountability and transparency and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the Secretariat in implementing the programmes mandated by Member States. We stress, that reform should ensure the strengthening of the United Nations. That should be our motivation. We should never allow reform to erode the fundamental institutional framework of the UN and the right of each Member State to be fully involved in the decision-making processes and to contribute to advancing the goals and ideals of the Organization. This right has been the fundamental strength of the UN and what sets it apart from many other multilateral institutions. It is and should remain the standard.

Madam President,

Geopolitical realities have changed significantly since the establishment of the United Nations. It is therefore logical that the Security Council should be reflective of the contemporary international community as a whole, based on equitable geographic representation and the increased representation of developing countries. It cannot be that less than 5% of the membership of the Organization continues to wield inordinate power over the rest of us. This is undemocratic and ultimately unsustainable.

It is on this basis that Jamaica supports expansion in both categories of membership of the Council with increased representation from all regional groups.

Madam President,

Jamaica underscores the vital importance of coherence in policy action and advice among the United Nations, and other international institutions including international financial institutions as well as regional organizations in the efforts to facilitate and encourage development especially of the small vulnerable and otherwise disadvantaged countries.

Jamaica has experienced more than its fair share of the adverse impact of incoherent international policies and advice over the years. I give three examples:

- 1) Jamaica has been forced to hold, in developed countries, a large fund of international reserves. Jamaica's NIR stood at approximately US\$2.22 billion or 18 weeks of goods and services import at the end of August 2006 while the country needs foreign exchange to facilitate investment projects;
- 2) Jamaica has international commitments under the Millennium Development Goals, *inter alia* to expand education and healthcare, to enhance environmental protection and to strengthen rural development, housing and sanitation. *These are all labour intensive.* The IMF is advising and without providing any analysis, insisting that Jamaica reduces the public service drastically; and
- 3) Jamaica is forced to compete with the salaries being offered by developed countries such as Canada, the UK and the United States to large categories of employees such as teachers and nurses while seeking to reduce its fiscal deficit. This is one of the major difficulties in the current Government wage negotiations with some of these

categories, to complete the second Memorandum of Understanding with public sector workers.

The United Nations has a major responsibility to lead in the quest for coherence in international economic programmes and policies. For Jamaica, a fortified UN, in particular a strengthened Economic and Social Council is vital to effect this role.

Madam President,

We continue to live in very turbulent times. Global peace, security and stability continue to be elusive. All the multilateral gains that we have made in recent years will count for little if there continues to be new and ongoing conflict situations, military interventions, terrorism and other debilitating threats to peace, security and development.

We must continue to emphasize the critical importance of multilateral diplomacy, of even handedness and of maximum restraint. We must reinforce the mutually beneficial relationships among us as a community of nations. We must equip the UN to act, and act decisively when that becomes necessary.

In that regard we welcome Security Council Resolution 1701 and look forward to every effort being made to build on this new platform to secure a lasting peace in the Middle East. We look also to similar action in other troubled regions of the world.

Madam President

We cannot remain indifferent to the tragic plight of the peoples of Darfur, Sudan. History has repeatedly demonstrated that indifference emboldens those who seek to act with impunity and result in even greater atrocities and humanitarian crisis. The international community must act urgently to protect the lives of innocent civilians.

Madam President

Disarmament and non-proliferation go hand in hand. It is only through total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that international peace and security can be assured. Jamaica is therefore disheartened that the international community failed to seize the opportunity provided by the 2005 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the World Summit to make significant progress on this issue.

Madam President,

Jamaica and other countries in the Caribbean region have major security concerns stemming from the easy access to an illicit spread of small arms and ammunition and the linkages to trans-national organized crimes including drug trafficking.

Jamaica feels a deep sense of disappointment that the 2006 Review Conference on the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons failed to conclude an outcome document which would have improved on the way forward in the implementation of the Programme. Jamaica will continue to advocate for the establishment of a legally binding instrument which contains stricter controls over the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition.

The recent adoption of a counter-terrorism strategy is a very clear demonstration that the global community has moved and can move together to confront major threats to civility, the rule of law and international peace and security. This should be the modus operandi.

Madam President,

We have been particularly encouraged by developments in Haiti which led to the democratically elected government of President Rene Preval. In July, Haiti was able to again take its rightful place in CARICOM. Coupled with the renewal of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti until February 2007, attention can now be focused on institution and capacity building as well as reconstruction and other initiatives for economic and social development in that country.

Madam President,

The Bicentenary of the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in the British Empire will be marked in 2007. For all CARICOM countries this is a special anniversary based on shared history. To symbolize the occasion, CARICOM members will be tabling a resolution in this session of this General Assembly with the expectation that the General Assembly will appropriately recognize the event. We look forward to the support of all delegations.

Madam President,

Jamaica strongly reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations and the multilateral process. Our continued commitment at all levels, including our support for the work of the International Seabed Authority, remains firm.

Madam President,

Before closing, I would like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the Secretary General for his outstanding leadership in guiding the work of the organization over the past ten years.

He has faced the challenges of our times; he has re-engineered the position of Secretary General to become the face, voice and conscience of the international community. He has brought civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector into the work of the United Nations; he has leveraged and brought high achievers in a range of fields into international service; and he has enlarged opportunities for consultations and dialogue. We wish him the very best.

Madam President,

Jamaica looks forward to a transparent and inclusive process to provide our Organization with a new Secretary-General who enjoys the confidence of the full membership.

I thank you.