



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE 59TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. President,

I congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of the 59th Session of the General Assembly. You can be assured of Jamaica's fullest support and cooperation during your tenure.

The outgoing President, His Excellency Julian Hunte of St. Lucia, deserves commendation for his energy and outstanding leadership over the 58th Session during which he achieved significant accomplishments, particularly in the revitalisation of the General Assembly. He leaves a legacy of a strengthened Presidency and a good foundation for further operational improvements in the work of the Assembly and its relations with other organs.

Mr. President,

In reviewing the developments of the past year, we note that the anticipated growth in the global economy has been dampened by uncertainties arising from macro-economic imbalances in larger economies and the impact of increased oil prices. Political instability in many regions of the world has not abated and in some cases has increased to critical levels. Many developing countries continue to struggle for survival in the globalized economy especially in the face of changing commodity regimes, the erosion of preferences and unfavourable market conditions. The gap between rich and poor continues to widen. There may be some glimmers of hope but more needs to be done to correct existing imbalances and to broaden opportunities for all to share in global prosperity. Formidable challenges remain for developing countries.

In our part of the world, these challenges have taken on grave new proportions in the wake of the recent spate of hurricanes which have devastated the Caribbean and affected several states of the United States of America. In the Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, the Cayman Islands, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti and my own country Jamaica, the loss of life and the scale of destruction and damage to infrastructure, property and the means of livelihood have been catastrophic. What had taken several generations to build has suddenly vanished and will take years to recover. The case of Grenada which was virtually obliterated is particularly striking. For those who have had doubts about the reality of vulnerability of small island states, these recent events should be convincing evidence.

In Jamaica, we are completing our estimates of the damage from Hurricane Ivan which struck on 10 September, virtually on the anniversary date of Hurricane Gilbert, still painfully fresh in our memory. On behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, I extend deep appreciation to the Member States, agencies of the United Nations and other international and non-governmental organizations which have given assistance. We have launched an

international appeal to support our national efforts for immediate and long-term recovery. Apart from the provision of emergency relief supplies, there is need for concessionary financing to the affected countries, so as to facilitate medium to long-term reconstruction. One means could be through the establishment of a Special Fund.

Mr. President,

In the context of these recent developments, the ten-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to be held in Mauritius in January 2005, is a timely opportunity for the international community to undertake special consideration of the vulnerability of small island states. We expect the Mauritius Review to adopt concrete measures and call for serious consideration to be given to mechanisms to support the recovery and reconstruction efforts of SIDS in the aftermath of natural disasters. What should also command attention are the dangers posed by climate change and global warming and the urgent need for global action within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol. It is imperative that all States accede to the Protocol.

Mr. President,

It is accepted that the benefits from globalisation are not being fully realised especially in the area of international trade. We should seek to harness its potential to the benefit of developed and developing countries alike. Interdependence makes this an imperative. Global economic health requires better management of the economic arrangements at all levels, to ensure a more equitable distribution of global prosperity.

The situation of small developing economies makes a compelling case. From any objective standpoint, there is a need for special and differential treatment in relation to trade, the flow of financial resources, the transfer of technology and the promotion of industrial development. The gap between rich and poor must be narrowed. Otherwise, many developing countries will continue in a downward spiral of declining income and increased poverty with painful consequences for political and social instability and recurring humanitarian crises. While there is no substitute for self-reliance, on the basis of the principle of shared responsibility, there is a role for all participants within the global economic system.

That is why international co-operation for development should be given a central place in our deliberations. There is need to create institutional capacity in the UN for the direction and coordination of policies affecting finance, trade and technology and for formulating the overall policies guiding international economic cooperation. Such a mechanism could forge effective linkages with the Bretton Woods Institutions to manage and promote coherence in international economic

programmes and policies. This mechanism should effectively respond to economic crises as they arise and apply remedies for imbalances and disequilibrium in the global economy. Some tentative steps have been taken in this direction following the Monterrey Conference, but much more is required to reform governance in the international economic system to make it more democratic, transparent and responsive to the real needs and priorities of developing countries.

Mr. President,

The cycle of violence from war and terrorism is a troubling phenomenon of our time. International Security is dangerously at risk. What is clear to us is that violence and the use of force cannot be the answer. We must embrace multilateralism and insist that international relations be guided by the rule of law as the basis for our collective security.

Against this background the necessary steps must be taken to strengthen multilateralism. The United Nations must be our instrument of choice. There is no viable alternative and it can only be made as effective as it needs to be if it is given the powers and resources. We must continue to nourish and strengthen it and make adaptations in the face of changing realities to improve its effectiveness and enhance its credibility. Reform could begin in the Security Council to make it more representative in membership, more democratic in decision-making and more accountable and transparent in its operations. These are necessary for effectiveness and legitimacy. We look forward to receiving the recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

Mr. President,

Improvement of international security depends on finding durable solutions to regional conflicts and disputes.

In Africa, there is a need to expedite relief for humanitarian emergencies, to promote initiatives toward the resolution of internecine conflicts and to advance the struggle for economic and social progress. We are distressed by the deterioration in the political and humanitarian situation in the Darfur region of the Sudan and we support constructive efforts to bring an end to the disruption and bloodshed. We commend the role of the African Union to resolve the crisis.

We continue to call for good sense and wisdom to defuse the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Jamaica believes that only through a process of political accommodation and the settlement of legitimate claims and grievances on the basis of justice and legality can there be any hope for a durable peace.

The war in Iraq has opened up further complexities and further divisions and is becoming a dangerous source of continuing conflict. A political solution is needed to bring about national reconciliation and peace.

Mr. President,

Small countries face particular dangers in maintaining stability and security. I am referring to the increasing production, distribution and proliferation of small arms and light weapons and sophisticated ammunition. These represent our greatest security threat. Small states do not produce these weapons but have become the principal victims. The influx of these weapons through various illicit channels is fuelling civil conflict and criminal violence, the extent and intensity of which beleaguer and often overwhelm national security forces. It is estimated in the 2004 Small Arms Survey that the proliferation and misuse of small arms contributes annually to approximately 200-270,000 civilian deaths, 40% of which are concentrated in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Equally disturbing to us is the insufficient appreciation of these dangers by those countries which are the producers and source of the weapons. We maintain that such states have a duty to prevent illicit transfers beyond their borders. Additionally, we need more effective co-operation to regulate and restrict the movement of these weapons and to have an effective registration and monitoring of transfers operating within a framework of legally binding obligations. For this reason, it is urgent that we move to conclude the negotiations for an International Convention to achieve these objectives.

We make this demand for action on the basis of the principle of the equal right to security for all States. The threats and dangers we face are as valid as those arising from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These also demand collective action and in this Jamaica has been unrelenting in its support of effective measures for curtailing the spread of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President,

The year 2004 was declared the *International Year for the Commemoration of the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition*. Our history makes this a special commemoration. We also celebrate the 200th anniversary of the independence of Haiti. The Haitian Revolution was an achievement of immense historical importance which significantly influenced the shaping of the modern world. It established the first free nation in the Western Hemisphere and also struck the first decisive blow which eventually brought about the overthrow of the system of slavery in the Americas. The Revolution was a story of heroism and triumph creating a legacy which has sustained the Haitian people during a long and often lonely struggle for survival over the years, in the harsh realities of a hostile world of racism and discrimination.

Sadly, the Bicentennial celebration has been overshadowed by circumstances of instability and political crisis which even now continue. The events of February still cast a shadow and leave lingering concerns about how the democratically-elected President demitted office. The sequence of events and the timing of the Security Council in reacting to the crisis were unfortunate.

Mr. President,

At the same time Jamaica recognises that Haiti requires the support and assistance of the international community which must be sustained over the long term to ensure its effectiveness. The rebuilding of democracy and the creation of a stable social, economic and political order cannot be accomplished overnight and therefore should be pursued with perseverance and commitment of the necessary resources.

We share the anguish and grief of the people of Haiti at the tragic loss of life and devastation caused by the recent hurricane. CARICOM will continue to do its part in providing emergency assistance.

Mr. President,

This year we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the International Seabed Authority. For all of us and for Jamaica this is a significant milestone in the quiet evolution and promotion of a legal regime for the seabed which embodies the principle of the common heritage of mankind. What we, as a community, can take from this to other spheres of international relations, is the importance of upholding the rule of law and the pre-eminence of principles of justice and equity. The Secretary General rightly emphasised the importance of these norms last Tuesday when introducing his report on the work of the Organisation.

The international community should not stand idly by while there are violations of international law and the promotion of doctrines which run counter to the principles of multilateralism. This is why Jamaica asks of this 59th session that all states recommit to the principles on which this Organization was founded to promote peace, equality and justice for all its members. Let us take the necessary steps to put these principles into practice and to make them the foundation of our policies and programmes. Our universal objective must be to implement the noble ideals to which we subscribe, and not just to articulate them.

Mr. President, I thank you.