



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

BY

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[Final Text]

Mr. President

Your own election to the Presidency of this 58th Session of the UNGA is a source of great pride and satisfaction to Jamaica and the entire Caribbean. We regard it as a tangible acknowledgement of the region's active engagement on the global stage.

I am confident that your combination of long political experience, outstanding diplomatic skills and commitment to global comity will enable all of us to benefit from your guiding hand at a time when the United Nations, the very cornerstone for global security and economic cooperation, faces its most severe test and the Charter itself is exposed to its greatest challenge.

We wish to commend the Secretary-General for his work during a very difficult year and in trying circumstances for the United Nations.

Excellencies

It may eventually prove to be a fortunate quirk of history, that by virtue of the rotation system, a distinguished representative of the Caribbean now occupies the chair.

For by virtue of our history, location and size, we who fashioned the Caribbean Community thirty years ago, recognised that we would never be able to acquire the economic power or military might to stand alone.

Multilateralism affords us the only source of protection.

So therefore, from its very inception, our Community has remained resolute in upholding the sovereign equality of states and the maintenance of an international order which protects the weak and powerless from domination.

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

Mr. President, the international situation today is filled with uncertainty and fear. There is a prevailing climate of distrust and insecurity.

Mankind faces the danger of terrorism, nuclear proliferation and weapons of mass destruction.

We witness outbreaks of war and violence and a worrying escalation of confrontation and conflict.

There are new doctrines and policies which threaten peace everywhere. The pillars of international law and respect for sovereign rights are being steadily eroded.

Injustice and abuses of human rights still remain manifest. These are real concerns which underscore the need to strengthen multilateralism, to restore confidence in the United Nations system, to buttress its centrality in decisions which affect us all, and enhance its capacity to enforce.

MULTILATERALISM

The multilateral process will collapse unless the international community asserts a strong collective will to review the structures, mandates and procedures in the global system.

In relation to efforts to strengthen multilateralism, I emphasize four requirements:

First, multilateralism must be equitable. This is critical for its credibility. It should promote policies, which provide full opportunity for all States to benefit from the global system and which take into account the needs, aspirations and welfare of the global community. It should be non-discriminatory and proceed from the principle that the lives of human beings cannot be differentiated on the basis of race, nationality or religion.

Second, multilateralism must be democratic. This is critical for its acceptability. Its decision-making should be based on a fully inclusive process, in which all States have a voice: where dialogue and equal participation are encouraged and promoted.

Third, multilateralism must be principled. This is critical for its legitimacy. It must be based on common rules and standards, devised and enforced by the international community, without selective application or double standards.

Fourth, multilateralism must be effective. This is critical for its efficiency. Decisions taken should be implemented. Member States must exercise the political will to guarantee that agreed policies and decisions taken are supported and upheld. Adequate resources must be provided where necessary.

In order to promote the interests of all States, the United Nations and the Multilateral Institutions must facilitate the creation of new opportunities for economic development through the expansion of trade and investment flows as well as technical co-operation assistance.

UN REFORM

To strengthen multilateralism, we need reform and rebuilding to improve the work of the United Nations in areas such as development co-operation, humanitarian affairs and disarmament.

No one dares to dispute, not even the five Permanent Members, the compelling urgency to alter the design and function of the Security Council, if it is to fulfil the mandate conferred by the Charter of 1945, but in the realities of the world today. The

case for expansion of membership is irrefutable. So also is the need to redesign decision-making to correspond with the principle of the sovereign equality of states.

Let me make it clear: The reform must extend beyond composition and geographical balance. We are certain to fall into a dangerous abyss, unless and until the Security Council is so constituted as to remove the absence of even a pretence at democracy in the global state and to deter arrogant deviation from the most basic elements of the rule of international law. The time has come to cut the talk and walk the walk.

In 2001, from this podium, I called for a United Nation's renaissance. Unless we undertake it now, only those who believe in a resurrection will be hanging around. We could not claim then that we were not responsible for its demise nor exonerate ourselves from the condemnation of history.

With regard to the General Assembly, what is needed is a resuscitation and use of the powers of the General Assembly and the assertion of its role as the principal organ of the United Nations.

The Assembly is a forum of equals. Its pronouncements and policy decisions must carry the stamp of legitimacy as the voice of the international community.

But while we emphasize the importance of institutional reform, there should be equal focus on the responsibilities of membership. There is need for revitalization in commitment and political will among member states to support the multilateral system and to provide it with adequate resources. Irrespective of whatever institutional arrangements we may devise, in the final analysis, it is the membership alone that can make the system work. We cannot afford to fail.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES

The critical problems facing us concerning war and peace are compounded by the proliferation of weapons of all kinds. Military expenditure globally now amounts to over US\$800 billion annually. Experience has shown however, that military power and massive investment in weapons do not bring security and lasting peace.

Lasting peace cannot be imposed by the force of arms. Instead, it breeds a climate of insecurity and feeds violence, war and terrorism with increasing destructive capacity.

At the same time, the arms industry fuels a rapidly growing underworld of transnational organized crime, which jeopardizes law and order as well as impedes economic growth and social stability within our national boundaries.

MIDDLE EAST

It is tragic and painful to witness the continued cycle of violence, carnage and the massive destruction of property in the Middle East. No solution can result from the continued military subjugation of the Palestinians or violence against the Israelis. A political settlement has to be found to provide security for the Israeli people, to establish an independent state for the Palestinians and to make suitable arrangements for the security of all states in the region.

We cannot begin to speak on the situation in Iraq without noting the atmosphere of fear, disorder and insecurity which now prevails in that country.

We deplore the recent bombings of the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad and the United Nations Office, which resulted in the death of UN officials, including that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq, as well as the bombing of the Shiite Mosque.

We must all learn from what has happened in Iraq over the last year. The immediate question is how to formulate interim arrangements for the recovery and reconstruction of the country and the restoration of its sovereignty and independence under a government chosen by the Iraqi people. Efforts to re-engage the UN must ensure that it assumes a meaningful role in the peace-building process and transition to democracy.

AFRICA

Mr. President, the situation in Africa has not been given the level of attention which is needed, particularly from the Security Council. The continued turmoil within parts of the continent shows the need for stabilisation through conciliation and dialogue between contending parties to end further fighting and bloodshed. We commend the role being played by regional organisations like ECOWAS and by African statesmen to mediate and bring peace to those areas of current concern. But more should be done.

Additional resources are needed to assist in ensuring that societies disrupted by conflict can be re-established and stabilised.

The obstacles to eliminating poverty and disease can be overcome by providing material assistance, as we are convinced that Africa has the indigenous resources, the human potential and the leadership to prevail over adversity.

THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY

Mr. President, within the global economy, the pattern continues of a widening gap between developed and developing countries. Wealth is increasing but poverty is also growing in critical areas of the world. Although we continue to raise our voices

constantly to warn of the dangers of this global trend, our partners in the developed world have given little indication of a change in policies to reverse it. We are continually told that prosperity will come with policies of liberalisation, a minimalist state and deregulation. In turn these will unleash free enterprise to take advantage of economic opportunities leading to development and growth. But it has become obvious that this model does not succeed everywhere, particularly in the developing world.

Mr. President, as you know so well, the countries of CARICOM have been for a long time, a region where democracy flourishes and the rule of law prevails. The strengthening of civil and political rights in our countries has been our passion since we gained our freedom.

We know that no country is above improvement in any of these areas, but there is a fashion in the industrial world – including countries that are new converts to these values – to imply that their adoption is the solution to all the problems of development. Were that so, Mr. President, Jamaica and all our countries of the Caribbean would have been havens of prosperity long ago. What much of the developing world needs must go beyond sermons about the precepts of democracy, obeying the rule of law and securing respect for human rights. The help we need is in preserving these rights from erosion by the instabilities that derive from under-development and from the steady deterioration in the global political environment.

In the international community, these same values are being systematically discarded and destroyed – as if our world society deserves less than our own national communities.

The persistence of under-development – the denial of people's full rights as human beings – is the major challenge that poor countries face. We make this clear, because it has become all too easy for rich countries to excuse themselves from any meaningful effort towards poverty alleviation and economic development by asserting that salvation lies simply in securing civil and political rights. That is exactly what they did at Cancun to the poorest countries in the world – to those who live in abject poverty - by denying their plaintive petition for a better deal in cotton.

Mr. President,

As current Chairman of the Caribbean Community, I assert that for us in the Caribbean, the future of our democracies lies in the strengthening of our economies; in a more favourable trading environment for our products; in more rapid and effective debt relief; in the protection of legitimate areas of economic progress like our financial services industry; in tailoring globalisation and the dogma of liberalisation to the needs of small economies. Our future lies, in short, in escaping the trap of poverty. That some are poorer does not make us less poor than we are; that some are less developed than we are does not alter our state of under-development.

COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Trade and competitiveness are not everything. In developing countries there are weaknesses in production capacity and deficiencies at the micro-level, which can be helped through programmes of development cooperation. Regrettably, in recent years, donor resources for such co-operation have been shrinking. Where commitments have been given, there have just been too many broken promises. But we still remain hopeful that the pledges of Monterrey and the targets of Johannesburg will be taken seriously as commitments to be implemented. The achievements of the Millennium Development Goals critically depend on the functioning of partnerships within Goal 8 of the Programme – Partnerships for Development.

Partnership should not be used as a vehicle for the imposition of conditionalities to promote bilateral political objectives. In our view, true partnership must respect the concept of ownership by recipients and the national priorities as determined by them. This makes it extremely important that the whole issue of development policies and development co-operation be monitored closely within the international system. Decisions affecting development are being taken in different arenas, forums and agencies. Increasingly, there is the need to ensure coherence in policies and programmes.

The international system currently does not have an effective mechanism for conducting such an exercise. We reiterate our belief that one of the urgent tasks of the moment is to create a mechanism within the international architecture, which will focus on trade, finance, technology and development policy in an integrated manner.

THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Of particular importance to CARICOM states is the need for special attention for the problems of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the issue of vulnerability and its effect on development prospects. We insist that in ensuring that in all international economic arrangements, special provision be made to accommodate the interests of the SIDS. We call on the donor community to support this effort when the International Conference to review the Barbados Programme of Action meets in 2004.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBALISATION

We in Jamaica and CARICOM fully recognize that globalisation has the potential to advance human development throughout the world. But this is not automatic. For globalisation has also increased our vulnerability, insecurity and the possibility of marginalisation.

Small developing countries, like Jamaica and CARICOM, cannot and should not be expected to follow the same policy prescriptions applied to larger, more advanced countries. Special and differential treatment of a meaningful kind is important, as we require policy space for our productive sectors. It cannot be expected that countries

such as ours will abandon local production in agriculture and manufacturing, although we fully recognize the growing importance and potential of the service sector in the regional and global economy.

In the aftermath of Cancun, we in the global community need to accept that:

- Trade rules must be asymmetrical in recognition of the diversity in levels of development and size of economies;
- Trade rules must also recognize the right of all countries to protect their development priorities and vulnerable groups, especially their small farmers;
- Development issues as they relate to the WTO agenda must be defined by developing countries themselves and not by others for us.

The world community must recognize these principles to ensure that the global trade architecture brings meaningful benefits for all.

DIVERSITY, RESPECT AND MUTUALITY OF INTEREST

Globalisation may bring a more integrated world but there will always remain significant variations in national systems, cultures and national priorities. There is no single sustainable model for political development or economic success. We live in a diverse world where different ideas, cultural norms and standards exist. These should be respected within the framework of agreed principles within the United Nations. In a world of such diversity and pluralism there should be tolerance, understanding, non-discrimination, self-determination and respect for equal rights for all.

These for us are transcendental values to which we in Jamaica and throughout the Caribbean fully subscribe.

The United Nations should continue to promote respect for diversity while promoting the common principles and ideals, which form the foundation for international law and order and international co-operation. This provides the only key for the pursuit of enduring peace and real development in the global village to which we all belong.

Thank you, Mr. President.