



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE P.J. PATTERSON, QC, MP
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA**

at the

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 56TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

***“A United Nations
Renaissance”***

New York, November 10, 2001

(Please check against delivery)

“A United Nations Renaissance”

Mr. President,

I am delighted to join in the chorus of warm congratulations expressed before this Assembly to the Secretary-General of our Organisation, His Excellency Kofi Annan, and to the United Nations itself, on the joint award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

We also join in this proud salute to those who have fallen in the line of duty and recognize those who continue to serve in areas of danger and all for the cause of peace.

It is a fitting tribute that this Prize, dedicated to the cause of peace and so richly earned by our Secretary-General in his own right and by the United Nations Organisation in its collectivity, has been conferred on them this year.

No one doubts that the accolades are deserving. They are most fitting at a time when the entire world is in upheaval.

The catastrophic attacks, cynically perpetrated on International Peace Day in the city that is host to the United Nations and elsewhere, have in their wanton slaughter of innocents and awesome destructiveness, sent shockwaves around the world. The messiahs of terror have, by the sheer magnitude and horror of their unprecedented crime against humanity, unified nations and people in the determination to remove the spectre of terrorism in all its many forms wherever it is manifested.

Mr. President,

Jamaica stands firmly with the international community on resolution 1373 (2001) of the Security Council against terrorism. As a member of the Council, we assert with particular emphasis and deliberation our unwavering commitment to the cause of ending this pernicious evil.

To defeat the forces of terror, our collective action must be firm, decisive, and broad-based.

International laws must become a binding framework for the defeat of terrorism.

Jamaica welcomes the ongoing efforts to elaborate the draft Comprehensive Convention against Terrorism. We hope that the momentum will be seized, during this General Assembly, to achieve measurable progress in this critical area. At the same time, the international community needs to take action towards the universality of the existing Conventions and other instruments against terrorism.

Jamaica is accelerating domestic action to achieve those objectives and, in this regard, I was pleased to sign, this morning, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

Mr. President,

For the past two years, Jamaica has worked with other members of the Council to make peace-keeping operations more efficient; to create strategies for sustained peace-building; bring warring factions to the peace table and beyond that, promote compliance with resulting accords; put in place mechanisms for protecting those most affected by situations of conflict, especially the women and children among them.

We are pleased with the work already undertaken in respect of the Brahimi Report on Peacekeeping Operations.

Through a number of Tribunals, we have demonstrated that the United Nations will act to end impunity. Despite sustained international efforts, several flashpoints still remain.

Jamaica is deeply concerned by the continuing cycle of violence and reprisal in the Middle East. Efforts to achieve a durable cease-fire have been thwarted at every turn.

Numerous resolutions by the Security Council have been ignored. We recognize the positive efforts of some Permanent Members to influence a return to the peace process, but the Security Council should not be marginalized in these initiatives.

Jamaica again urges the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to spare no effort in complying with agreements already reached. We call on both parties to remain engaged in the quest for a durable peace.

Mr. President,

We dare not neglect the millions of children worldwide who suffer from hunger, disease and ignorance. In situations of conflict, children are the most vulnerable victims.

We have all been horrified by their exploitation as child soldiers, by the trafficking and sexual abuse that numerous children have suffered. We have to remember that they constitute the generation of tomorrow, in whose hands will rest the future for international peace and security.

Nor must we forget the importance of humanitarian assistance to the innocent people in conflict-torn areas of the world; to refugees and displaced persons, as well as to those who are victims of natural and man-made disasters. For them, the United Nations must become a beacon of hope for the peace and stability which will enable them to lead normal and productive lives.

Mr. President,

Military strikes cannot by themselves eradicate terrorism. In our response, we need to be mindful that the time has come for us to inaugurate a new era of peace; not simply through preventing war, but by eliminating the causes that give rise to strife and violence.

And so, I come to this podium today, to call for a United Nations renaissance, for a rebirth of this Organisation, which will not just permit it to be the harbinger of peace, but empowers it to foster the climate that ushers in a new age of global development and a dynamic partnership for human prosperity.

We are in a time of fear, not just in this country or here in this city, but worldwide. Fear for the lives of people; fear for the state of economies, national and global; fear that our propensity for wanton destruction may impair the capacity of the planet itself to sustain life. These fears are compounded by other blights: of disease, of ignorance, of bigotry, of ethnicity, of religion and of gender; the blights of cruel and autocratic governance and, most pervasive of all, the blight of poverty.

The expansion of the global economy in the last four decades, has not eliminated gross poverty or even reduced its prevalence.

A sophisticated, globalised, increasingly affluent world, currently co-exists globally and within countries, with a marginalized underclass.

The hungry, the homeless, the destitute are less impassioned about the physical insecurities of terrorist repression or the damaging consequences of military warfare.

The unemployed, those who are ill without healthcare; those who are cold without heating; those who are old without social support; for these victims, 'security' is a meal, a roof, a job, medicines, warmth and relief from poverty in general.

But these needs are as real and insistent – and represent for them the most immediate denial of their rights as human beings.

During the last decade, the process of globalisation, deregulation and privatization has swept the world.

It is incontrovertible that it has not been a golden age for a large proportion of the world's people. Not just for the 1.3 billion of the absolute poor in developing countries whom the benefits of globalisation seem to have bypassed, but for many millions in industrial countries also.

We delude ourselves if we believe that all those engaged in street protests, whether in Seattle, Washington, Prague, Quebec City or Rome are simply anarchists.

International institutions must not only be accountable: they must be subject to democratic governance.

It is becoming more widely recognized that a new global institutional architecture is needed to establish representative superintendence of the global economy, directed towards enlargement of social and economic justice worldwide, targeted to a sharp redirection of the numbers mired in gross poverty and deprivation.

Some of the desired progress may be possible through existing institutions. More radical reform may also be required.

Democratic superintendence of the global economy, has to be a central feature of the fresh global architecture we seek to fashion during this decade.

The new global architecture must incorporate appropriate arrangements for a start to be made in raising global resources for global purposes – in ways that do not generate alarm.

The persistence of gross poverty, the long list of environmental abuses, the disturbing reduction in development aid and the vagaries of foreign private investment make the case for global revenues compelling.

Mr. President,

The world faces crucial choices. We have to identify and follow a guiding principle if humanity is to make an enlightened response to the challenge.

We can hardly return to the principles of a feudal world in which military power and economic strength are concentrated in the hands of a few, while we indulge in an illusion of order through the marginalisation of the many. In our interdependent, interconnected world, this is no longer a credible option.

Our only way forward lies here in the United Nations; from the vision that propelled the generation of 1945 to pursue the path of collective responsibility for peace and human progress through a regime of multilateral action, anchored by the United Nations.

Mr. President,

It was coterie of governments, in a rare moment of collective wisdom and creativity, that settled the United Nations Charter. It was not without flaws in its inception and some have remained to hobble its capacity to initiate the renaissance we need.

It is within this context that the demand for the reform of the Security Council becomes even more urgent, since its present design and functioning weaken its capacity to fulfill its mandate.

We must remove existing constraints on the United Nation's capacity. Even as we work to improve it, to reform it, we must proclaim the United Nations to be the temple in which we can all worship. *We, the People* – must be made a reality to thus fulfill the commitment made in their name in the Charter of 1945.

Today, our greatest hope lies in people; in people of all races, of all genders, of all faiths; people of all continents and oceans, people of all ages, the 'ordinary' people of the world and those who hold themselves of higher station. All the world's people are affected by the calamities that loom; all must be involved in turning humanity away from gloom and to finding the light.

The Charter does not set out the principal organs of the United Nations in a hierarchical order, but the General Assembly is the only 'principal organ' under a Charter that embraces all the members on a 'one member, one vote' basis. It is the symbol of the United Nations as a universal organization in the democratic tradition.

I believe it is within this General Assembly that the true renaissance of the United Nations must begin.

The special value of the General Assembly is its universality, its capacity to be a forum in which the voice of every Member State can be raised. It provides the opportunity for countries to ventilate issues, bring complaints to the floor in the General Debate, and suggest new ideas in Committees. But the assumption surely is valid that deliberation should inform action.

High among the changes that should mark the United Nations' renaissance is the revitalization of the General Assembly as a universal forum of the world's states. Even with a reformed and somewhat enlarged Security Council, many Member States with a capacity to contribute significantly to the policies and programmes of the United Nations and to global governance will have to remain on the sidelines. A General Assembly that occupies more of the stage and reorders its work to make it more focused, more result oriented, will allow each of us a meaningful role in world governance through our work in the Assembly.

It is in the interest of the world community to have a more vigorous and effective General Assembly. It can and should play a vital legitimating role in the United Nations, consonant with the universality of its membership.

Here in this General Assembly, we are the practitioners of international affairs. At the heart of the conduct of those affairs lies a sense of realism. I, too, am conscious that the accumulated baggage of decades cannot be shed in a single heave.

That is why I do not speak for reform; but advocate instead a renaissance – a rebirth which offers the chance of facing the 21st century with sound values, no longer predicated on a world of adversarial states, but on an interactive world of people that has espoused neighbourhood values: of respect for life and liberty, for justice and equity, for tolerance and caring; values that balance rights with responsibilities – that elevates the democratic ethic at both the national and global levels.

Mr. President,

We are a long way from that consummation, however devoutly we may wish it. But we are sufficiently frightened by the prospects that confront us to recognize the need for humanity to take the path 'less traveled by'.

There are enough good people in all our societies – who together are the silent majority of the world's people – to ensure that by choosing this new path, we can indeed make a real difference.

We have to find a better way than the one a divided world has been pursuing. That way has to lie through the United Nations as an Organisation; but a United Nations revitalized; its agencies repaired, reformed and responsive to a culture of new values appropriate to our time.

Mr. President,

This new era of global relations demands bolder and more ingenious approaches to confidence building and to development as a prerequisite for international peace and security. An equitable framework to finance national and global development, to fuel expansion of international trade and foster sustainable development must be placed on the front burner, whether we gather in Qatar, Mexico or South Africa.

If these three global Conferences are to succeed, Member States must be guided by full recognition that this new era of global relations demands more ingenious approaches to confidence building and to development as a prerequisite for international peace and security.

In closing Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your Chairmanship of this General Assembly and to commit Jamaica's total support for the attainment of our common goals in the service of mankind.

Whatever may be our colour, culture or creed, we belong to a single race – the human race; occupying a single planet, which has more than enough to enable each and every nation to enjoy the abundance which Mother Earth has to offer and for all its people to dwell together in harmony.

Now more than at any time in its history, the United Nations is the best vehicle to procure global peace and to foster international cooperation.

Let this General Assembly proclaim that the renaissance of the United Nations has indeed begun.

November 8, 2001