



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

REMARKS BY

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**ON THE OCCASION OF
44TH ANNUAL MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
MODEL UNITED NATIONS**

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Thank you Mr. Secretary-General,

**Faculty, Organizers of this annual model UN,
Participants, Students, Advisers and well-wishers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is an honour to join you at this 44th annual model UN Security Council organised by Mississippi State University. At the outset, I offer congratulations to the University, in particular the team that has worked tirelessly to organise this event. And let me also congratulate all the participants who have researched and practiced and prepared to be in this year's staging.

Just recently, I came across a little-known fact: Model UNs have been in existence from even before the UN itself. Just this week, we saw the 80th anniversary of the first Model UN, which was hosted from 18 - 20 March 1943. As you know, the UN was established two years later in 1945.

For eight decades, Model UN has been like a small pebble creating great waves of change that touch every corner of the globe, and its success is in large measure due to the dedication, energy and talent of its participants.

Seeing so many young people coming together in this fashion is truly heartening. The United Nations is your United Nations. It was created just over 75 years ago for the peoples of the world, and not only do you represent their future, you are also showing up in the present, in so many ways taking charge of that future!

It is deeply encouraging to see that so many of you, the leaders of tomorrow, are already taking an active interest in the work being done at the United Nations. By coming together and assuming the positions of different Member States, by walking in their shoes, so to speak, you will gain new insights and come to understand that diversity of views is not a bad thing.

Diversity brings innovation. Diversity forces us to think about each other more deeply; to find ways to understand each other better. It is therefore something to be celebrated and encouraged. This is how we learn and grow, how we become stronger, better, together.

Among multilateral institutions, the United Nations has a special place. It is the only one that is truly universal. The United Nations 193 Member States do indeed include the largest and the smallest, from China, with a population of nearly one and a half billion, to Nauru with just over 10,000.

The United Nations is not a world government, and was never intended to be one. It is a consortium of sovereign nations, coming together in the recognition that they have common cause and shared interests and that it is only through concerted action among nations that the major challenges affecting the world can be tackled.

The United Nations itself, and multilateralism in general, are currently going through one of those periods in history where their role, value and relevance are under scrutiny. This, too, is not a bad thing. From such scrutiny, we can also grow as an Organization, stronger, better, together.

In these times of uncertainty, it is critical that those of us who believe in the values of justice, human rights and the rule of law and international morality, continue to speak out. We need to defend those institutions which provide us with the best, if not the only hope of realizing our collective human potential, and reaffirm our commitment to the abiding promises and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Coming from Jamaica, a state that firmly believes in these tenets, I feel very much at home in this company of passionate students and supporters of multilateral cooperation. So, I am profoundly grateful for the invitation to address this summit of future leaders, especially as the United Nations is now working towards a Summit of the Future in 2024, for which we are contemplating the world we wish for future generations to inherit.

As ever, we are living in a time of transition, but now it appears that change is moving at even more exponential speeds and in new ways. We see many areas of progress and development, yet at the same time, challenges abound and often seem intractable. The approach we take to these matters - whether as citizens within our countries, or collectively as states across this planet - will determine what kind of future we craft for future generations. It also affects our present realities.

The crises we are living through and from which we are emerging – the COVID-19 pandemic with its concomitant prospect of sustained economic slowdown and high unemployment, the climate emergency, entrenched and systemic racism, resurgent nationalism and irredentism, gender inequality and oppression – are all too complex and multifaceted for any one nation to tackle them on its own. They are best tackled together.

Multilateralism matters to all states, big or small. We need to see it as the lifeblood of international relations, as the UN's founders envisioned back in 1945. Virtually all of human history prior to the end of World War II was defined by the power dynamics built around the notion that might made right. The rise of a nation, a group of nations or a people necessitated the fall of others. Competition inevitably led to collision and conflict.

Then from the ashes of WW2, our nations united in choosing a different path. We adopted a set of principles to prevent conflict and alleviate human suffering; to recognize and defend human rights; to create a framework to foster an ongoing dialogue to uphold and improve a system aimed at benefiting all people. We committed to work to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

We agreed to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, ...

In the years since, our planet has faced daunting challenges, from the divisions of the Cold War, the vestiges and legacies of colonialism, and the shameful lack of action in the face of some mass atrocities. And even today, as we sit here, conflicts, injustice, and suffering around the globe underscore how many of our aspirations remain unaddressed and unfulfilled.

But despite all of that, it is undeniable that no period in modern history has been more peaceful or prosperous than the one since the United Nations was created.

This bold endeavor, despite its imperfections, has endured because the overwhelming majority of people and nations continue to recognize that it embodies their interests, their values, their hopes and it has proven itself to be a viable mechanism for peaceful and sustainable development.

But in recent years, months and weeks, the system of institutions, regulations and norms built up over the past seventy-five years has been subject to sustained attack. A regression from a rules-based system into power-based strategies will not result in a safer, more predictable or prosperous environment for any country.

And now, some would even question the value and relevance of multilateral cooperation. Jamaica believes it is not only relevant, it is vital, more so than ever before. Multilateralism is still our best tool for tackling big global challenges – like the existential crisis of climate change with which SIDS like Jamaica contend daily; or the fight against terrorism, which seeks safe refuge in various corners of the globe; or indeed, the food and water crises which are poised to fuel even more domestic and cross-border conflict in especially vulnerable regions.

We built the multilateral system in part to solve big, complex problems like these, where the fates of people around the world are tied together and where no single country – no matter how powerful – can address the challenges alone.

We must instead cooperate and collaborate to surmount the shared challenges and work tirelessly to strengthen the core principles of the international order as we do so. In so doing, we must determine how multilateralism can be defended and strengthened in light of today's challenges, and those to come in the years and decades ahead.

Today, the complex era of globalization has shown some perplexities, even some schizophrenia: protectionism, ultra nationalism, outright racism and xenophobia, have once again reared their ugly heads, sometimes in the most unfortunate ways and in the most unexpected places.

In this 21st century, we hear so-called leaders harping back to the dog whistles of a bygone era to stoke their narrow, selfish political fortunes, uncaring about the dark past from which those tropes and practices emerged and whence they should be firmly entrenched and buried.

Yet, with all its opportunities and challenges, the number of areas where multilateral action is needed is growing exponentially. In the globalized world we live in, problems migrate more easily than people. They don't need passports and visas to travel.

To address them, we need solutions that are equally attractive to the human spirit; the good parts of the human psyche, and which transcend national borders, too. We need all nations big and small, coastal and landlocked, islands and continents, rich and poor, to work together. In other words, we need multilateral solutions.

Only by multilateral action can we ensure that open markets offer benefits and opportunities to all.

Only by multilateral action can we give people in the least developed countries the chance to escape the misery of abject poverty, disease and disinformation — by dismantling trade barriers, boosting technology transfer, promoting investment, and providing development assistance, debt relief and aid.

Only by multilateral action can we protect ourselves from acid rain, or global warming; from the prevalence of infectious & non-communicable diseases; the illicit trade in drugs and weapons, or the growing and odious problem of human trafficking.

Only by multilateral action will we ensure that emerging and evolving technologies - such as AI, cyberspace, and digital technologies - are accessible and well-regulated against human harm but used for human benefit.

But beyond those gargantuan issues, immeasurable in scale, multilateralism works for us in more down-to-earth matters too – in ways that make our lives easier without even noticing.

Every time you board an airplane, for example, you depend on the International Civil Aviation Organization for global standards for airplane and airport safety, aviation communications; and performance of pilots, flight crews, air traffic controllers and ground and maintenance crews.

And you depend on the World Meteorological Organization and its World Meteorological Vigil system, which enables planes to pick safe routes through stormy skies.

Every time you make a long-distance telephone call, you are relying on the International Telecommunication Union, which sets the rules and international

arrangements that make it possible for countries to connect through global networks; and which manages the allocation of radio frequencies and satellite orbital positions.

These are just some of the ways that multilateral cooperation works for all of us, every day of the year.

Now, the advantages for small countries to follow a genuine and consistent multilateral path are quite obvious. Their interests will be better protected if they form part of a large community with a common design and speak with a unified and therefore amplified voice.

For bigger countries, the reasons may seem less obvious at first glance. They may have the hegemonic power and the capability to go it alone. Indeed, sometimes it seems that imperial aspirations can be quite tempting, for some. But is it really in their interest in the long run? I believe that it is not. By accepting the rules of multilateralism, they can ensure that other countries follow them as well.

Now, navigating and negotiating the interests of Member States can be tedious, difficult and complex. It may be tempting, as a small country, to throw the towel in, or as a powerful country, to pressure others to get the results you want.

But what is important is to be able to see the bigger picture, to realize that something emerging out of consensus or negotiations may in the end have the greater value for all countries, big and small. Otherwise, the result is very often a good one for only some, usually the more powerful, and very bad for the others, usually the most in need of a good outcome.

Even if the United Nations is made up of Member States, its work is really about people. And to carry out its mission well, the United Nations needs the support of people everywhere. That is why events such as this are so important. Countless of your predecessors have walked this road and emerged from their exposure with a greater appreciation of, and dare I say commitment to, global action.

Multilateralism has been embraced by generation after generation of young people like you. And it is my hope that you will absorb this experience, and let it inspire your future selves to work across boundaries - artificial and real; be open to cultures - familiar and odd; to choose peace, shared prosperity and common humanity when the decision falls to you. I trust that I am speaking to future ambassadors, a future Secretary of State, a future UN Secretary-General.

Please accept my best wishes for a very stimulating and fun two days. And so, I bid you good luck and farewell in the immortal and inspiring though slightly adapted words of Jamaica's global musical legend Bob Marley: One Love, One Heart, Let's [work] together, and we will be alright!

It is therefore my pleasure and distinct honour to declare the 44th Annual Mississippi Model Security Council Conference OPEN!