



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

STATEMENT BY

**THE MOST HONOURABLE PORTIA SIMPSON MILLER, ON, MP
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA**

TO THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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"GLOBAL SOLIDARITY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT"

Mr. President,

I am extremely pleased that a son of the Caribbean, one with such wealth of experience and tested diplomatic skills, is presiding over this 68th session of the General Assembly.

I commend the Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, for his untiring effort to promote international peace and development and thank him for his exemplary leadership.

A Pivotal Moment in Time

Mr. President,

The theme for our debate *"The Post-2015 Development Agenda": Setting the Stage* catapults development to the centre of the UN agenda impelling us to elaborate a meaningful and far-reaching development framework for the benefit of all.

Our deliberation and actions during this session must therefore send a clear message of hope to the many millions who sadly, are still living in poverty and inequity.

Let us redouble our efforts to fight against the scourge of poverty. It was the late Jamaican National Hero, Marcus Mosiah Garvey who aptly said:

"Poverty is a hellish state to be in.

It is no virtue.

It is a crime.

To be poor is to be hungry without possible hope of food;

to be sick without hope of medicine;

to be tired and sleepy without a place to lay one's head;

to be naked without the hope of clothing;

to be despised and comfortless.

To be poor is to be a fit subject for crime and hell."

Mr. President,

Too many of the world's citizens are facing that reality.

We need to fulfil the 2000 Millennium Declaration which entrusted to us the responsibility to chart a path towards development underpinned by a commitment to eradicate poverty based on a global partnership.

As the deadline for the attainment of the MDGs draws near, in under a thousand days, we face many challenges including the global economic and financial crisis, climate change, natural disasters, high levels of debt and conflict.

It is imperative for us to accelerate our efforts with the limited time remaining.

Anything less would be a disservice to our people.

While we contemplate a post-2015 development framework, we must also complete unfinished business in the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger; combating HIV/AIDS; halting and reversing the incidence of malaria and tuberculosis; and increasing access to reproductive health.

Post-2015 Development Agenda

Mr. President,

In our deliberations on a post-2015 development agenda we must determine how best to shape a globalcompact that is universal and people-centered, and which strikes the balance between the need for robust economic growth, job creation, poverty eradication and the equally important need to preserve and protect the environment.

Our deliberations have to take into account the special needs of disadvantaged groups of countries, in particular, the vulnerable group of Small Island Developing States which are grappling withclimate change, sea-level rise and the need to deal with new and emerging economic and social situations.

We are pleased that international attention will be focussed on Small Island Developing States in 2014 when the international community will observe the International Year of SIDS.

The success of the Samoa Conference in 2014 will depend on strong international support and mainstreaming SIDS issues in all activities across the UN system.

A sustainable approach to development should include disabilities in the post-2015 development agenda.

It should also provide for the prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseasesand additional financial resources to sustain the global fight against HIV/AIDS.

Another major threat to development is the high incidence of road crashes. I call on all countries to take more seriously the challenge of reducing injuries and fatalities resulting from road crashes and traffic accidents as a serious policy issue.

Sustainable Financing for Development

Mr. President,

There is an urgent need for innovative and sustainable financing to underpin our developmental efforts.

Reforms should be undertaken in a manner that will assist Middle Income Developing Countries to deal with the challenges they face.

These reforms must address public debt sustainability and review the classification system of middle income developing countries to ensure the utilisation of more relevant and appropriate measures of development.

Unemployment and Job Creation

Mr. President,

There is urgent need for greater focus on job creation including for unemployed youth. I note that the International Labour Organization has estimated that global unemployment will rise to 202 million this year.

This alarming statistic is overshadowed by estimates of the global working poor, which are in the order of 869 million; almost 400 million of whom live in extreme poverty.

Jobless growth is reflected in rural and urban pockets of poverty and social deprivation.

Increased investment in developing countries with a focus on job creation is an avenue that must be actively pursued.

Social Protection

Mr. President,

We need to provide more assistance for people to cope with daily life, as growth and prosperity are unevenly distributed and the most vulnerable are at risk of falling through the cracks, being overlooked and failing to achieve a decent quality of life.

Social protection schemes should work effectively to provide for basic needs and encourage target groups to pursue self-advancement while facilitating empowerment, and fostering greater inclusiveness.

As countries like Jamaica implement strategies to deal with indebtedness and also encourage growth and investment, it is critical that international financial institutions, multilaterals and other development partners recognise the importance of social protection mechanisms.

Protecting our Children

Mr. President,

As we forge the agenda for development for the next decade and beyond, we do so in part on behalf of a group which is very close to my heart – our children.

The future we want, the future we craft, the future we achieve will be our legacy to our children.

We must redouble our efforts to safeguard their rights and enhance the development of our children.

Despite limited resources, Jamaica continues to make every effort to meet its obligations to our children.

We condemn violence and abuse against our children and reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the rights of children everywhere.

We must leave no child behind.

Human Trafficking

Mr. President,

The issue of human trafficking is of paramount concern. I am always mindful of the horrors and evils of slavery – in history and in this modern day form.

I am particularly moved by the knowledge that young girls and boys are torn daily from the bosom of their families, taken to strange lands, placed in sub-human conditions and forced to perform unspeakable acts.

We must unite in our efforts to eliminate this transnational scourge and bring an end to human trafficking, particularly among our women, men and children.

We must ensure that in this modern time we do not have a re-enactment of slavery.

We must stamp it out wherever it exists and bring the perpetrators to justice.

We must protect our future generations.

Never ever again should anything resembling slavery be tolerated anywhere.

Mr. President,

Jamaica is proud to lead the efforts, in collaboration with CARICOM countries and members of the African Union, to have the Permanent Memorial to the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade erected here at the United Nations.

The unveiling of the winning design of the permanent memorial earlier this week, signals an important chapter in our journey to honour the memory of the millions of men and women who were subject to untold atrocities.

When I attended the unveiling I was reminded of the words of Reggae icon, Bob Marley:

"Old Pirates yes they rob I, sold I to the merchant ship, minutes after they took I, from the bottomless pit; but my hands were made strong by the hand of the Almighty, we forward in this generation - triumphantly."

We are grateful for the generous contributions towards the erection of the memorial and we encourage the international community to continue to provide financial support for this important initiative.

Jamaica supports the call for an international discussion in a non-confrontational manner on the question of reparations.

We fully support the initiative for a declaration of a Decade for Persons of African Descent.

Peace and Security

Mr. President, the quest for development will not be complete without requisite attention being paid to peace and security.

My heart goes out to the families of the victims of the horrific attack in Kenya.

Transnational organized criminal enterprises wreak havoc on economies and challenge the capacities of states to deal with these threats.

No country is immune to the direct or indirect effects of the scourge of transnational crime.

Increased collaboration is necessary in confronting such threats to human development.

To this end, we welcome the recent opening for signature of the landmark Arms Trade Treaty in June of this year which represents one of many steps that the international community must take towards defeating terrorism, crime and violence. Jamaica is currently undertaking efforts towards ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty.

Bilateral and regional cooperation through information sharing, capacity building and assistance are integral in dealing with crime and violence and security issues.

We remain deeply concerned about the suffering of the people in Syria and join the international community in condemning the use of chemical weapons.

We welcome the recent positive steps taken by the United Nations Security Council.

Jamaica remains firmly committed to a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the situation in the Middle East.

Cuban Embargo

Turning closer to home, the trade and economic embargo against our neighbour, Cuba has caused untold hardship to its people. It has no place in the 21st century.

We reiterate our call for an end to the embargo against Cuba and extra-territorial measures which target third countries.

Conclusion

Mr. President, Jamaica has never lost faith in the influence for good that exists here in the United Nations.

We are fully aware that the expectation and aspiration of peoples, rests in our hands.

At this pivotal moment in history, let us revitalise the partnership on which this great institution is built.

I draw on the words of Martin Luther King Jr. when he said:

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges and expectations of our time are indeed great.

It falls to our generation to take a stand.

Now is the time to act.