



PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Statement by the Honourable Bruce Golding

Prime Minister of Jamaica

in the General Debate

Monday, 27th September 2010

Mr. President,

Again, I congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the 65th Session of the General Assembly and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

I extend Jamaica's appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Dr. Ali Treki, for so ably guiding the proceedings of the 64th Session of the General Assembly.

Partnership of Nations

We come to the chamber of this great institution as partners. It is the only organization of its kind where countries of the world, no matter how rich or poor, big or small, powerful or weak, sit at the same table joined together by the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members.

As leaders, we are privileged to be the custodians of the world, mandated to secure for its people a just and peaceful existence and to enable them to achieve happiness and prosperity.

We come with differing perspectives shaped by our own experiences and the peculiar challenges we face. But we have long recognized that however unique our individual circumstances may appear, they are all affected by our interdependence.

The impact of climate change shows that we all live under the same canopy. Diseases that can devastate whole populations know no boundaries and require no entry permit. Natural disasters are indiscriminate in the selection of their targets. The financial crisis on Wall Street didn't disrupt just the American economy; it ricocheted across the world affecting millions of people who don't even know where Wall Street is. Communications technology has rendered us neighbours in the same village for, no matter how vast the oceans that separate us or the continents over which we are scattered, we are affected or influenced for good or bad by each other.

It is in this mutuality, this interconnectedness and interdependency with all our commonality and diversity that we find both our strengths and our weaknesses. We have seen those strengths at work and what they can accomplish, the positive difference we can make when we

surmount our differences and find common purpose in preventing wars and securing peace, safeguarding human rights and promoting human development.

And we recognize our weaknesses, our failure so often to raise our lowest common denominator to a level where consensus can more readily be found and action galvanized. We cannot afford to ignore the cynics who feel that we should have done more for there is more that needs to be done. Some age-old problems still remain and new challenges have emerged that threaten to undermine the achievements we have already made. We refuse to accept that after 65 years of our existence 1 ½ billion people should have to live in poverty and more than 1 billion suffer the pangs of hunger. The playing field of the world is still not level because the equality of our sovereignty has not been matched by the equality of opportunity. Global warming, terrorism and transnational organized crime pose new threats to the peace, security and progress of the world.

Mr. President, the heavy agenda set for this 65th session reflects the scope and complexity of the issues that confront us. Each of us approaches that agenda with a different set of priorities. Yet, there are some issues that are so broad in their implications that they demand from all of us special and urgent attention. They manifest themselves in the stark reality of our existence. 20% of the world's population enjoys 75% of the world's income. 15% of the world's population lives on less than 1% of the world's income. We come here as equals but when we go back home some are vastly more equal than others.

It is easy to blame this on the injustices of the distant past, the neo-colonialism of the more recent past or the Washington consensus of the present. That is only part of the story. Developing countries struggling with poverty and under-development must accept our share of the blame. We must recognize that there is a lot that we can and must do for ourselves. Each of us must adopt and pursue with fixity of purpose the appropriate economic and social policies and good governance practices. We must be prepared to take the tough decisions that are so often necessary to secure the advancement of our people and we must never squander the sacrifices we call on them to make. President Obama was right when he declared at the High-

Level meeting last Wednesday that each of us must assume leadership of our own transformation even while requiring the support of the international community.

Development Agenda

The existing international financial system and multilateral trading arrangements will not enable these imbalances to be redressed. They have not done so up to now and they are unlikely to do so in the future. Market forces and competitiveness are indispensable for economic development but the new millennium cannot be defined by the survival of the fittest. We must make it our business to assist the weak to become fit in order to not just survive but prosper.

For almost a decade we have been trying to conclude the Doha Round in order to put in place a regime that facilitates the expansion of trade so vital to increasing global prosperity. Redressing the lopsidedness in international trade is necessary if we are to restore and sustain global economic growth. It is common sense that if one part of the world is not able to export more to the rest of the world, it won't be able to import more from that other part of the world. It may do so for a time by borrowing from that other part of the world to pay for its imports but that is a bubble that will eventually burst. Many countries have seen that bubble burst in the recent global crisis.

Our insistence that Doha must include a development dimension to build competitiveness and capacity in weak exporting countries as well as special and differential treatment calibrated to our differing levels of development, economic size and vulnerabilities offers a win-win situation – more exports from developing countries, more jobs for their people and more demand for imports from other countries.

We urge that every effort be made to conclude the Doha Round in this spirit and we urge, further, that the gains already accrued to developing countries in earlier negotiations be not unraveled.

The global financial crisis exposed weaknesses in the governance of the international financial system, weaknesses that have become more acute with changes in the global landscape and

shifts in the center of gravity of the world's economy. We endorse the need for reform of the international financial institutions to improve standards of efficiency and accountability and the creation of a more democratic structure and one that will allow developing countries a greater voice.

In the same vein, while we welcome the establishment of the G20 as the locus of global economic policy making, we urge that it institute a mechanism to engage the views of the wider developing world. It is also important to establish a close working relationship with the UN to ensure complementarity with the role of the UN in economic development as mandated under its Charter.

We urge, also, that the multilateral agencies move beyond what is now the paramount objective of ensuring that the international payments system is secure. The financial assistance provided to many countries during this time of stress, necessary and welcome though it is, is rooted in policies that are contractionary, designed to consolidate and stabilize even at the cost of increasing poverty and social dislocation.

We have hardly learned from the experiences of the past. The gains made toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals are being eroded and our ability to recover from the global shocks is being stymied. Bold, new thinking is required that places development as the primary focus of multilateral intervention. Sacrifices we know we must make but let those sacrifices be an investment for our future, not just a tourniquet for our immediate dilemma.

Environmental Sustainability

Mr. President, we, too, are disappointed that the Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen failed to reach consensus on mitigation and adaptation strategies. While the Copenhagen Accord did not deliver the comprehensive agreement we had hoped for, it nonetheless provided political impetus for negotiations toward a binding agreement for the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. We are hopeful that Cancun in November will further advance the process that will eventually lead to a legally-binding and comprehensive agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Bali Roadmap.

As countries that are among the most vulnerable to global warming, CARICOM and its partners in the Alliance of Small Island States will continue to defend the long-term stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations with a cap of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The 2°C threshold advanced by some would be catastrophic for countries in our region and low-lying small island states in general and we appeal to all partners to coalesce around a temperature threshold which would preserve the viability of the most vulnerable countries as underscored a few days ago during the High-Level Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy.

The commitment by developed countries to provide US\$30 billion in new funding to assist developing countries to improve mitigation and adaptation strategies over the next two years is an opportunity to prove the cynics wrong, to demonstrate that when we speak, we say what we mean and mean what we say.

Natural Disasters

Mr. President, the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti in January of this year and the recent disastrous floods in Pakistan are stark reminders of the increasing vulnerability of many countries and regions to natural disasters. We were shocked by the immensity of the impact of these disasters and saddened by the loss of life, the suffering and the destruction of property and infrastructure. We express our solidarity with the governments and people of both Haiti and Pakistan.

Haiti

The reconstruction of Haiti is CARICOM's most urgent priority. We commend the international community for committing almost US\$10 billion from 57 donor countries and organizations. However, we impress upon them the urgency with which actions must follow these commitments especially in strengthening the institutional capacity of Haiti to undertake the mammoth task at hand. The Haitian people have suffered too much for too long. We have a duty to help them to make a fresh start and embark on the journey of lasting progress and development.

We underscore the important role of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, MINUSTAH, in helping to foster the environment necessary to ensure a sustainable future for the Haitian people.

Peace and Security

Mr. President, the danger to international peace and security of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism must remain at the top of the international security agenda.

We are encouraged by the 2010 Review Conference of the Non Proliferation Treaty in June which elaborated on measures toward a nuclear-weapons-free world and the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We have no doubt that a contributing factor was the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty signed between Russia and the United States of America in April of this year. We look forward to the ratification and entry into force of this Treaty between these two states which, together, possess more than ninety percent of the world's nuclear arsenal. Their faithful compliance with the Treaty and commitment to greater transparency in achieving further reductions will secure our hope for eventual nuclear disarmament.

We are also encouraged by the resumption of talks between Israel and Palestine. This offers renewed hope for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that guarantees the security of Israel and the unquestioned recognition of a Palestinian State. We urge both sides to ensure that this renewed hope does not turn into disappear.

Transnational Organized Crime

Latin America and the Caribbean are faced with the twin menace of the illicit trade in narcotic drugs and small arms. The open borders in the Caribbean make us an easy conduit for transshipment between the major sources and destinations of illicit drugs. The attendant crime and violence constitute a major threat to national development because they create instability and force us to divert scarce resources to tackle this scourge.

Jamaica has adopted a multi-faceted approach to tackle crime and violence, relying not only on law enforcement but strategic social intervention and social transformation initiatives to create new opportunities and inspire hope among, especially our young people who are vulnerable to being recruited or conscripted into criminal enterprises.

But we cannot do it alone. The transnational nature of organized crime requires cross-border collaboration at the bilateral, regional and international levels to combat the illegal trade and tackle with equal vigour the supply, transit and demand sides of the international drug trade. The recent High-Level meeting on Transnational Organized Crime and the Fourth Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons were instrumental in reinforcing the need for the implementation of measures to curtail the growing threat.

These efforts would be strengthened by the conclusion of a legally binding instrument to curtail the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ammunition and we urge the United Nations to approach this troubling issue with the urgency that it deserves.

Institutional Reform

Mr. President, international institutions cannot retain their legitimacy if they do not adapt to changing times and the new configuration of the international community. The UN Security Council cannot be exempt from this process. Fundamental reform is required to address the existing imbalances in the current power structure of the Council and secure expansion in both categories of membership to correctly reflect the contemporary global realities.

In advancing the discussions on system-wide coherence, we support the need to improve the operations of the UN at the country level to ensure that the system can appropriately respond to the needs of recipient countries and to prevent the unnecessary imposition of undue conditionalities. In this context, we laud the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and congratulate former President of Chile, Mrs. Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as Head of UN Women. I am confident that under her leadership significant progress will be made to achieve the goals of gender equality and meeting the special needs of women and girls worldwide.

The Permanent Memorial to the Victims of Slavery and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

We must not allow ourselves to be imprisoned by our past but even as we look to the future, we dare not ignore the experiences that have shaped our present condition. The transatlantic slave trade to which millions of Africans fell victim was one such epoch. CARICOM states are, therefore, pleased that our initiative to have erected a permanent memorial to honour the victims of slavery has won the support of the United Nations community in keeping with the mandate of the 2001 World Conference on Racism. We commend UNESCO for its decision to launch an international competition for the design of this monument.

Conclusion

Mr. President, Jamaica reaffirms its confidence in the United Nations as the indispensable forum for our collective deliberations aimed at addressing the major challenges confronting our world. We must take pride in our achievements but always be mindful that our mission is not yet accomplished. We must never tire even when burdened with frustration. Our impatience must be turned into renewed energy. In our hands has been entrusted the responsibility to make this world a better place for all of mankind to live, prosper and enjoy happiness. That is what they expect of us. That is what they deserve and that is what we must do everything in our power to deliver.