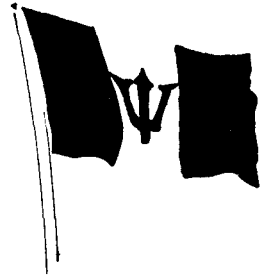




*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



STATEMENT BY

**THE HON. DAME BILLIE MILLER
SENIOR MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE
BARBADOS**

TO THE

**GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE
61ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

**United Nations Headquarters
New York**

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Madame President,

It is my pleasure to join with the preceding speakers in congratulating you on your election to preside over the sixty-first session of the UN General Assembly. My sentiments are doubly pleasurable, for in sixty-one years you are only the third female President of the Assembly. Throughout your distinguished career, you have championed with much determination and courage the cause of women's rights and I am confident that you will bring these and other outstanding qualities to your presidency. I pledge to you the fullest cooperation of the Barbados delegation.

I would wish to thank and congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson for his leadership of the 60th regular session of the General Assembly and in particular for the skill he demonstrated in that very challenging task.

Madame President,

I must also take this opportunity to say a special farewell on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has served this organization with great skill and dedication over the last ten years. Secretary-General Annan has had to face myriad challenges over this period, and he has always found the strength of character and purpose and the fortitude to craft the appropriate solutions. Barbados wishes the Secretary-General well as he proceeds into retirement at the beginning of next year, and we look forward to welcoming him again to the beautiful shores of Barbados when he feels the need for some respite and recuperation.

I would also like to use this opportunity to welcome our newest member Montenegro into the family of the United Nations.

Madame President,

In July this year the formal return of Haiti to the Councils of the Caribbean Community was greeted with great satisfaction by all. At that time the CARICOM Heads of Government pledged their full assistance to Haiti to facilitate efforts at that country's development and renewal.

We call on the international community to support the strengthening of democracy and the social and economic development of Haiti, and to disburse in a timely manner the funds pledged for the country's renovation and development. We cannot afford to repeat past mistakes.

Madame President,

This session of the General Assembly provides an important first opportunity to review and assess the progress of the implementation

of the decisions of the historic 2005 UN Summit. At this juncture, for Barbados, the assessment is decidedly mixed.

The United Nations reform agenda which emanated from the UN Summit encompassed a wide spectrum of issues. We are pleased that some progress has been made in areas such as the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Central Emergency Response Fund, agreement on a counter-terrorism strategy, and the revitalization of the General Assembly. We regret that progress on the development cluster of issues, which enjoyed broad consensus at the Summit has been painfully slow. Also further work still needs to be undertaken on Secretariat and Management reform as well as that of the Security Council.

Madame President,

The primacy of development in the global agenda must be ensured. Barbados considers your initiative to select development as the theme for this General Debate to be laudable.

If we are to achieve the MDGs by 2015, the next ten years must be the decade of implementation in which we collectively mobilize the will and resources needed. In this connection, we commend the Secretary-General for recommending a number of additional targets which would facilitate the monitoring of progress in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

When I addressed this Assembly one year ago, I called for the adoption of a new target within the MDG framework on universal access to sexual and reproduction health and rights. Barbados thanks the Secretary-General for recognizing the critical link between sexual and reproductive health and rights and development, and we fully support his recommendation for a new target under Goal 6 of the MDGs. We are equally supportive of his other recommendations for new targets on universal access for treatment of HIV/AIDS by 2010, and also on decent work and productive employment.

Madame President,

We would also like to see speedier implementation of the decisions on increased financial resources for development which were made last year at the G8 meeting in Gleneagles and at the UN Summit. These resources are now needed urgently, particularly by those countries, like my own, that have completed the preparation of their comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other international development goals and objectives.

While developing countries must retain responsibility for their own development, national actions will not be sufficient to bring about their fuller participation in the global economy. These actions must be complemented by a supportive international system, essential elements of which include improvement in global governance, improved coherence in the operation of the United Nations System and a greater voice for the United Nations in global development policy dialogue.

Madame President,

Changes in global governance have not kept pace with the growth of global interdependence, and far-reaching institutional changes are required to bring about a more effective system. We call for the democratization of the governance of the international financial and trade systems, and concrete steps to be taken to end the marginalization of developing countries and small economies in the policy formulation and decision-making processes in the multilateral, financial and trade institutions. Globalization must be made more inclusive and its benefits more equitably distributed.

Madame President,

Barbados also believes that improvement in global governance must be mirrored in the strengthening of the management and coordination of the UN's operational activities at the country level. This will ensure delivery of development assistance in a more coordinated way, lead to better absorption of aid by recipient countries and ultimately,

facilitate their attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Indeed the UN must be developmentally holistic. We anxiously await the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on this issue.

A stronger United Nations voice in development led by a revitalised Economic and Social Council will also contribute to improvement in the desired enabling international system. Barbados will continue to work with other UN member states to attain at this 61st session of the General Assembly a resolution on the reform of the Economic and Social Council.

Madame President,

Permit me to focus for a few moments on the issue of trade, for there is nothing else more important for small developing countries than an improved multilateral trading system if we are to have the chance to participate in and benefit from the ongoing process of globalization.

The failure of the WTO talks to achieve agreement on new commitments for trade reform in the agricultural and industrial goods

sectors represents a very real crisis in international trade negotiations. The challenges of reforming trade in these areas are not insurmountable. We call on the developed countries to demonstrate a unity of purpose to resolve differences among themselves, remembering that this round of trade talks is about development, or more precisely about raising the standard of living of people in developing countries. Consistent with the theme of this year's session of the Assembly "implementing global partnerships for development", developed and developing countries must partner together to achieve a workable agreement.

If there is to be a successful outcome to the trade negotiations, a narrow focus on trade liberalization and enhanced market access alone will not be enough. For while it is important to have agreements that open up access to markets, it is even more essential for any negotiated trade agreement to contain provisions that would assist developing countries to implement policies aimed at transforming their economies. In other words, market access is meaningless without goods and services with which to trade.

Madame President,

An adjustment mechanism will be required to assist developing countries in coping with the loss of preferences, markets and the resultant reduction in financial resources during this most important transitional phase of their development.

For the Small Vulnerable Economies this will mean some form of special and differential treatment to facilitate their full integration into the multilateral trading system.

Special and differential treatment should not be seen as a concession nor an exception to the rules, but rather a concept based on the development and policy needs of countries at differing levels of development. It should consist of a broad mix of provisions and programmes that recognize and appreciate the characteristics of developing countries and the economic challenges which trade liberalization and globalization pose for them, and seek to address these factors genuinely. In the words of the Prime Minister of

Barbados, the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur, special and differential treatment is nothing more than “reciprocity with flexibility. Among equals equality, among unequals proportionality”.

Madame President,

During this session, the Assembly will return to a consideration of the agenda item on the Caribbean Sea. We appeal to the members of the international community to recognize the fragility of this precious shared natural resource of the Caribbean, and its importance for most of our present and future economic activity, and agree on measures that will need to be taken to recognize the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development.

Also during this session of the Assembly the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade will be recognized. Barbados joins other delegations in requesting the Assembly to set aside a day in late March of next year to commemorate this important date. This will not only deepen our knowledge and understanding of slavery and the

slave trade, but also contribute to the removal of all the vestiges of slavery.

Madame President,

Recent events suggest that we need to remain ever vigilant to threats of terrorism. They further remind us that once again we face increasing challenges to world peace and security. Barbados is of the view that there must be a concerted effort on the part of the international community to ensure that disputes among States do not continuously result in military action and the loss of lives and that States remain mindful of the rules of humanitarian law and civilian rights.

Madame President,

The questioning of the efficacy of the United Nations has not abated in spite of the ongoing reform process, and the threat to multilateralism remains real. In this our 40th year of membership of

the United Nations, Barbados reaffirms its faith in the Organization and proclaims its unwavering commitment to multilateralism.

Over the past forty years, Barbados has played its part in strengthening and widening the role of the United Nations to enable it to promote and protect human rights, to eradicate poverty and disease, and to cultivate a global culture of peace. Strengthening the role of the United Nations system in the management of global affairs and upholding and defending its moral authority remain key foreign policy priorities of the Government of Barbados.

With the growing complexity and unpredictability of international affairs, especially in the context of globalization and with the emergence of new challenges to peace and security, the fulfillment of the role of the United Nations remains critical. It is now more than ever that we need to strengthen the structures and institutions of the international system to safeguard our common interests in achieving a global order of peace and economic and social progress for all.

We must all work together to reform this vital Community of Nations and ensure its preeminence in matters of development, human rights, peace and security, and that it remains the principal forum for exercising multilateralism.

We are not at liberty to abstain from this task.