

**Statement by Her Excellency Dessima Williams
Permanent Representative of Grenada to the United Nations
At the Sixty-Seventh Session of the United Nations
Monday, 01 October 2012**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. President, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Colleague Excellencies,

I am honoured to address this august 67th Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the Honourable Tillman, J. Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada and the Government and people of Grenada.

Grenada commends the work of the United Nations over the past year, with special commendation for the leadership and the stewardship of out-going President, Qatari diplomat His Excellency, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz -Aziz Al-Nasser.

Mr. President, we repose in you and your team, our confidence in and support for the success for your work ahead this year, under the general theme, "Bringing about Adjustment or Settlement of International Disputes or Situation by Peaceful Means".

Mr. President, Grenada's full esteem and support for the United Nations extends to our able Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, whom we thank for his continued leadership and service to Member States.

Grenada continues to give its unwavering support to the United Nations

Mr. President, Grenada recommits, unwaveringly, to the principles of the United Nations, as embodied in the Charter. Our commitment, in national and international life to the norms of peace, equality, justice and to human rights and multilateralism, is clear. Over the past year, Grenada ratified and deposited treaties to the UN, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In ratifying the Rome Statutes, Grenada became the Member State that brought the treaty into force. This exemplifies Grenada's commitment to the principle of Rule of Law, which resonates with every Grenadian as a result of our enthusiasm for justice and ending impunity. Grenada welcomes the Declaration from the September 24th High Level Meeting and anticipate that we will undertake a voluntary pledge.

Mr. President,

Of further significance, in April 2012, Parliament passed the End Violence Against Women Legislative and Policy Reform (2012). Aware that by itself, the passage of a law is insufficient to change society's entrenched cultural attitudes and practices, we are also embarking on public education and on strengthening the capacity of government departments and more.

We will continue on this path to secure the rights of people. For we are convinced that law and security are the sine qua nom for the facilitation of the peaceful settlement of disputes, which is itself a foundation for an international environment of peace. Indeed, democracy, good governance, social inclusion, conflict resolution, development and sustained overall progress are helped by the rule of law within our countries and in the international system.

Sustainable Development – a global and Grenada Priority

Mr. President,

Grenada is a small island developing state, classified as middle income. Nature has been especially generous to us, and our people are extraordinarily hard-working and big-spirited. Yet, the fruits of nature and of our own efforts have been undermined by Hurricanes Ivan and Emily in 2004 and 2005 and the advent, in 2008, of the global financial and economic crisis. Notwithstanding, we remain confident that there exists a pathway to our own efforts and the support of the international community and this great organization.

Mr. President,

From Grenada's perspective, the highlight of the past year, has been renewed international political commitment to sustainable development; indeed, interest continues to gain momentum.

Mr. President, sustainable development is one of your declared priorities for this year and the Secretary General announced that sustainable development is number one on his agenda during his second term. In June 2012, more than hundred and twenty Heads of State and Government endorsed the paradigm of Sustainable Development in the outcome of the World

Conference on Environment and Development, Rio Plus + 20, *The Future We Want*, as our common vision. The Heads declared: **"We resolve to take urgent action to achieve sustainable development"**. They agreed to articulate policies and programs to promote socially inclusive behavior to quickly and equitably bring about prosperity, doing so in such a manner as to instill hope and create opportunity for those yet to come.

Mr. President,

With Grenada's tremendous green and blue endowments and our people's living intelligently with them, Grenada has long considered itself **An Island of Sustainability**. Today, Sustainable Development describes Grenada's holistic policy framework, defining our consumption and production path, as spelt out in Grenada's Five Strategic Development Pillars: Energy Development; Education, Health and Wellness; Information Communications Technology; Tourism and Hospitality; and Agribusiness.

Grenada is committed to a path of sustainability. Its determined efforts are led by our energy policy: under that policy we aim to reduce fossil fuel usage by 20% by the year 2020 and to be a completely the manufacturing sector is rapidly emerging as a producer of indigenous green and organic products.

Mr. President,

Recall that Grenada is **building back from the World Bank determined loss of 204% of GDP due to the destruction caused by Hurricane Ivan in 2004** and Hurricane Emily in 2005. We have made great strides with recovery due to the generosity of our neighbours and friends everywhere, for which we remain ever indebted and grateful.

Since 2008, our situation has been compounded by **the weight of the global financial and economic downturn**, which is dwarfing our development efforts due to loss of tourism and port receipts and even remittances. However, we recognise with deep appreciation that as our economy has slowed in direct response to the global financial crisis, our neighbours are again coming to our assistance.

Grenada is defined as a **middle-income country** and yet, its stability and growth are challenged by serious socio-economic predicaments. We are facing the **high cost of fuel and food; costs associated with confronting the illicit trafficking in drugs and small arms and light weapons, and related crime; and an** increase in unemployment and poverty.

Mr. President, what is consistent here, is that like so many in the Caribbean and in small island developing states, Grenada contributes least to the financial and economic crisis, to green house gas choking the atmosphere, to the production of arms and illegal drugs, and yet, these scourges impact on us disproportionately when compared to the producers, and of course on our ability to respond effectively.

The Path Forward!

The path forward rests primarily on **an improved domestic environment**; we continue to do that through our laws, economic and social policies and our national spirit of perseverance. Among our many initiatives, in January 2013, Grenada will co-host a meeting in the Caribbean with business innovator Sir Richard Branson to ensure sustainable management of our marine and coastal resources.

Yet, Grenada, and I daresay the region and all small island developing states and developing countries as a whole, need **a far more supportive international policy climate and affordable financing for a safe and secure way forward** into greater sustainability. This will be the way we hold on to the hard-earned progress made thus far in respect to the Millennium Development Goals and how we will be able to expand them. We also hope to be guided by the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework to further support our ambitious economic and social transformation agenda.

The International Environment

We continue to believe that peace and security and a reduction in military spending in the international community will be good for a global economic recovery, which in turn will be good for the financing of sustainable development.

Unless there is recovery in the large economies to which our economic life remains tied, we will see no sustained recovery in Grenada. We call for commitments to developing countries to be met and we remain willing partners for South-South cooperation.

The staggering loss of human life in Syria must be brought to an end by all those responsible. We call for a politically negotiated and urgent end to the situation and we reiterate our support for the work of diplomacy by the United Nations and the Arab League. We call for policies of inclusion and openness to all just aspirations of all members of society in the Middle East and elsewhere and Mr. President, we reiterate our call for a State for the Palestinian people, in a negotiated two-State agreement with Israel through a Peace Plan. The injustice meted out to the Palestinians, including widespread unemployment, poverty and displacement must end now. The Palestinian people, led by their Government, the Palestinian Authority, have our strong support for their just aspirations. We are convinced that the two Nations can co-exist side by side in peace and harmony, like so many other countries.

Grenada takes this opportunity to extend once again its heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the United States of America and to the bereaved families of Ambassador Chris Stevens and his colleagues. Grenada deplores those senseless acts and continues to call for the improvement of the protection of all diplomats serving abroad.

Grenada calls for the cessation of the trafficking of weapons through our region and for a firm and comprehensive, yet expeditious agreement on small arms and light weapons. We also renew our call for the preservation of the Caribbean Sea as a Zone of Peace and Development and an end to the passage of nuclear waste in our waters.

Special Support for SIDS

Mr. President,

Grenada welcomes the Third Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 2014 and the calls on the international community to lend its fullest and broadest support to this conference. We further call on the United Nations General Assembly to designate 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States to raise awareness of the special situation of SIDS and to mobilize international support for their sustainable development. Support to SIDS from China in energy efficiency and from Norway in renewable energy are already coming on stream.

Without a legally binding climate regime to uphold environmental integrity, Caribbean and other small island states could lose the opportunity for achieving sustainability soon and some could even disappear. We see the up-coming COP 18 in Doha, Qatar as an opportunity to move decisively away from this scenario and we welcome the commitment of the European Union to agree to an ambitious Second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol and to climate financing. We call on other developed countries to do likewise and on the Secretary General to help States Parties move steadfastly toward the finalization of a new binding climate treaty by 2015 and a gap-less period of climate financing starting January 2013.

Revitalization and Reform of the United Nations

If the UN is to continue to lead the way in sustainability, security and peace, it must be reformed so as to be revitalized for the road ahead. The centerpiece of this revitalization must be Security Council Reform, particularly to include small island developing states. Only a revitalized UN can play its historic role to guide the world, including its international financial institutions, through the geopolitical volatility which is destabilizing the global economic and financial order. Reorganization of the United Nations must not mean the loss of vital country programmes, especially for small countries. The UN must continue its irreplaceable work on behalf of women and Grenada is pleased to serve on the board of UN Women and to contribute to its endeavours.

The Caribbean region

Revitalize and reform must also take place in the Caribbean as well. To that end, we call for the complete removal of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against our sister Caribbean state of **Cuba**. This US embargo against Cuba, now almost 50 years old, is in complete contradiction of the spirit of the UN Charter. The removal of that embargo has been specifically called for by the leaders of the Caribbean Community as well as by an overwhelming majority of UN member states. Cuba plays a significant humanitarian and development role in the Caribbean and its economic liberation from the embargo will allow it to contribute even more, in the dynamic of growing South-South cooperation. Further, Cuba is now playing a facilitating and mediating role in one of the hemisphere's longest political crises, which constitutes a major contribution to peace and security in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Two years after the unfathomable national disaster in our sister nation of Haiti in 2010, thousands of our fellow **Haitians** are still homeless and suffering, as their Government remains without sufficient means to complete the national rebuilding process. Grenada extends its gratitude to all who have pledged and realised those pledges for the benefit of the Haitian people. Grenada remains steadfast in its commitment to this imperative, and renews its appeal to the international community to fulfill its commitments and where possible increase its contributions to the humanitarian and development needs of Haiti.

The United Nations is Indispensible. Just some one hundred days ago in the exquisite city of Rio de Janeiro, Prime Minister Thomas said this, and I quote:

"The United Nations is indispensable to the Future We Need. Grenada considers the United Nations to be the best placed for decision-making affecting the international body politic. Indeed, the United Nations has the full legitimacy needed to command authority, secure consensus and the necessary trust among all global stakeholders. We recommit to the UN and support its reform."

We Charge you with the "Kirani Spirit"

Mr. President, on August 6th, Grenada made history, winning its first Olympic medal, a Gold in the Men's 400 meters, thus becoming, according to one calculation, the country with the highest medal per capita ratio in the world. Our people have not ceased in their celebration of Gold Medalist Kirani James and the significance of this remarkable achievement for such a small nation.

Another enduring act celebrated around the world, was the graciousness demonstrated by Kirani when he exchanged bibs with his competitor Oscar Pistorious, the outstanding double amputee from South Africa, who despite running an extraordinarily good race came in seconds behind soon-to be Olympic Gold medalist. It was a simple Grenadian gesture of admiration, friendship, and solidarity, routine among human beings, but one that underscores that the human spirit must prevail in relations among individuals and, and I daresay, among nations. In one simple act recognizing the right and far more importantly, the nobility on another human being with different but comparable ability and spirit, transformed two runners into two brothers. One South African, one Grenadian, one shared humanity.

We name that the "Kirani Spirit" –for which not even an Olympic gold medal can reward. We charge this institution with the Kirani Spirit – charge as in giving energy, charge as in commanding, charge as in holding the collective responsible, charge as in charging each nation and its people.

Mr. President and I thank you.