



**ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE NICKOLAS STEELE,  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS  
OF GRENADA  
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 69<sup>TH</sup> REGULAR SESSION OF THE  
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Mr. Secretary General, Fellow Leaders, Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

Mr. President, let me first of all thank the outgoing President John Ashe, for his sterling efforts in presiding over the 68<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in a year that was designated for island states around the world. Let me also congratulate you and welcome you as incoming President of the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly. Mr. President, you can count on Grenada's support to contribute to the deliberations in a positive and meaningful way.

As we gather here in New York yet again, we can celebrate a remarkable history of our institution in this beautifully refurbished UN Headquarters. Mr. President, I wish to put on record, Grenada's appreciation of the donors' contributions and the Secretary General's leadership of this project. With its large open spaces and glass façade, the building's design speaks to our ideals of transparency, openness and dialogue. The building's mid-20th Century features recalls the spirit of an age where space was the new frontier. The space age has given way to a new and exciting information age. Today, a young girl armed with a Smart Phone in Gujarat, India, can Google the same satellite images of our planet as a child in Great Britain. Exposed to the right ideas on the internet, children – whether from Greenboro, USA, Grenoble in France or Grenada in the Caribbean -- can have the same seeds of hope; the same aspirations for happiness and personal growth; and the same sense of duty towards neighborhood and planet. For aspiring young people everywhere, a coming of age is symbolized by ownership, not of a car, but of a mobile phone or a computer tablet. These are today's vehicles on the information highway for the world's youth seeking ideas, identity, and connectedness.

Mr. President, we come to the United Nations today to feel that sense of connectedness amid the chaos of today's challenges. We come to these refurbished headquarters to renew our commitment to peace and security; and to revitalize our mission -- not to the stars – but a mission towards a safer planet with shared prosperity for all.

Today, in this iconic hall, it is too soon to say "Mission Accomplished" but, -- for the most part – our original mission for dialogue and the rule of law amongst abiding nations states, has been accomplished. Sitting here amongst ourselves we are -- for the most part-- preaching to the

converted. The longstanding conflict between Israel and Palestine has given way to a realization that the only viable solution is the two-state solution. Moreover, Mr. President, sworn enemies, in this Hall, now confer on how to tackle much more sinister enemies of peace.

These new enemies have no flags fluttering proudly outside, nor electronic name plates inside. They are not here in our space-age hall; they are out there in cyber-space. A place where violence and hate, in isolated corners, can spread like wild fire across the globe. Captured on mobile phones and uploaded to the internet, gruesome images from a remote back-street can inflict fear in the hearts of ordinary citizens on main-street, everywhere. The shock beheadings in the media are weeping ooze from the cancerous underbelly of our world today. They are the symptoms of an insidious and pervasive unease eating away at the very foundations on which this great institution was built. And with each new escalation of violence we feel a sense of horror not only by the acts themselves but – perhaps more so – by our inability to act. War and insecurity in the information age has mutated so much, that neither our resolutions, nor our agencies, nor our armies are enough to break the fever of this viral menace of transnational actors. And so, looking beyond our Capital Master Plan that re-imagines our 20<sup>th</sup> Century beginnings, let us build a new Information Master Plan fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with electronic highways that will one day connect this hall to every child in every village.

Mr. President, the information age is a new Season in the arc of our institution's history. A new season in which everyone has a voice: be they the youths of the Arab Spring or the Occupiers of Wall Street's Winter of Discontent.

Today's information-age brings a new transparency between the haves and the have-nots. Between the 1% and the 99%. Whether segmented by class, race, religion or political affiliation, inequality is the disease of our times, contributing to political eruptions the world over. We now have – for the first time – documented evidence on the root causes of the growing inequalities in society. A new economic treatise entitled '*Capital in the Twenty First Century*', by Thomas Picketty, analyses over a century of economic data. That the rich are getting richer, faster than everyone else. But there are two things that reduce income inequality. The first is the distribution of knowledge that promotes growth. The second is war, which destroys capital. The first option is a rising tide that lifts all ships; the second is a sinking stone that drowns all hope; the very antithesis of this United Nations. We must focus more of our global policy on proactive interventions that promote sustainable growth. And we must encourage economic growth by distributing knowledge through education, information and Communication Technology and also through skills and technology transfers. This is also why we need an Information Master Plan if we are to proactively confront threats for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Mr. President, the 2011 World Development Report on Managing Conflict published by the World Bank acknowledges that Development agencies have not yet fully adapted to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And that they do not yet have the capacity to adequately help fragile states. It finds that unemployment is the number one reason for youths to join both criminal gangs and contending armies. And it reminds us that "Investing in citizen security, justice, and jobs is essential to reducing violence." Because we know that once mass violence takes root in

a society, it can take a generation or more to restore. As we look around at the violence in the world today, I ask the question, can our 20th century institutions cope with 21st century shocks? Do we have the courage to be proactive in fostering jobs and growth or will we wait until violence erupts? 'The 2014 World Development Report' is all about Managing Opportunity and Managing Risk from the level of the household to the level of the international community. The essence of this report is that the benefit of proactive preparation can outweigh the cost of reactive responses.

Mr. President, the risks, from Climate shocks are amongst the most terrifying for Grenada and for islands around the World. Grenada places on record its appreciation of the Secretary General's leadership in calling for a Climate Summit.

In the last four years alone, we have seen floods raging across the world; with the hottest temperatures on record in recent years, forest fires have raged across almost all continents, devouring millions of acres of land with damages in the tens of billions of dollars. Glacial retreats from the Andes to the Himalayas and from Greenland to Antarctica are moving at record speeds. We are seeing hurricanes and cyclones as never before. Two years ago, right here in New York, Hurricane Sandy struck and disabled the economic engine of the United States. It caused \$68 billion dollars-worth of damages. But this represented less than 1% of the GDP of the United States. Contrast this with island states where damages of between 10% and 50% of GDP are common. And in the case of Grenada, we had damages worth 200% of GDP from Hurricane Ivan alone. Even as we are here, this week, Grenada was plagued with unseasonably high rains that have caused numerous landslides; the value of damages is yet to be determined. We, like our neighbors of St. Lucia and St. Vincent in 2013 are forced to dedicate already scarce financial resources to repair and mitigate this.

Mr. President, there is link between these events and the high indebtedness of small Caribbean islands. To paraphrase the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy for the Eastern Caribbean:- "The years when increases in debt-to-GDP ratios were unexplained by fiscal policy, these were the same years in which natural disasters occurred." Given these risks, Island states need concessionary financing. This is critical to ensure growth, jobs and economic development. For SIDS, a robust economy, combined with risk management policies and instruments, is the best combination for resilience.

Mr. President, when our current administration was elected, sixteen months ago, the indebtedness of our country was unsustainable. But the Grenadian people came together under the leadership of Prime Minister Mitchell, unions, churches, NGOs, political parties, businesses, all rallied to form a social compact to put Grenada on a firm fiscal footing. We tightened our belts and asked the Grenadian people to contribute more as we undertook our home-grown fiscal reform.

The indebtedness of SIDS must be counted among the many challenges of our time. Mr. President, the annual cry of the small island states to make concessionary funding available, is the early warning system for the international community. Let us settle the LDC graduation issue in favour of SIDS rather than use it as a parallel climate-negotiating tool against the SIDS.

Mr. President, one country that is singled out for its stellar management of disasters is CUBA. We all have much to learn from Cuba on areas as diverse as disaster risk management and public health management. Cuba sends its engineers, its teachers and its doctors around the world to improve the lives of others. Is it not time to fully recognize the contribution of Cuba to the international community – and if not now, then when? Is it not time to end the cold-war attitudes to Cuba – and if not now, then when? Is it not time to end the embargo against Cuba – and if not now, then when?

Mr. President, the explosion of violence that we see in today's troubled spots is driven by the flawed principle of, disrespect international law and territorial integrity of member States. There comes a time when old enemies must turn swords into ploughshares and look to the future with dignity and with hope.

Mr. President, just as Climate Change is the challenge of our time; it can also be said that Climate Change is possibly one of the greatest opportunities for wealth creation and shared prosperity that this generation has seen. Today, the renewable energy market is estimated to be in the order of \$16 trillion dollars; \$12 billion in the Caribbean, alone. In 2012, there were some 6 million jobs in renewable energy; and IRENA expects 17 million jobs by 2030. Today, pension funds with collective assets exceeding \$12 trillion dollars are focusing on climate risk, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Mr. President, island states, like Grenada, are seized not only with climate challenge, but also with climate solutions. For us, the most sustainable form of adaptation to climate change is a robust economy combined with sound disaster-risk-management policies and instruments.

But in Grenada, we cannot educate our people, if our school children have no access to electricity. Due to high import costs of fossil fuels, electricity in Grenada costs 4 to 5 times higher than in developed countries. But countries with low electricity prices have to subsidize renewables. Not so in the islands. Islands like Grenada come to the climate table, not like hapless victims with cap-in-hand, but with an offer to the international community:- 100% Renewables can be introduced with zero subsidies .

Mr. President, if we are to limit global Carbon dioxide concentrations to 450 parts-per-million, then, according to the IPCC's 5th Assessment Report a total transformation is needed of our electricity sector. While island states are the least of the emitters, they are the most cost-effective places for renewables. I congratulate SIDS DOCK, IRENA and Sustainable-Energy-For-All, for acting on this. Grenada is working to transform its electricity sector. Solving the energy challenge for islands like Grenada will remove a drag on our economies and better position us to withstand environmental shocks. This is adaptation with prospects for jobs, growth and shared prosperity for all. And I am delighted to announce that, in addition to working with Germany, the World Bank, SIDS DOCK and IRENA, Grenada has signed a groundbreaking MOU with the United States to assist us in transforming our energy mix as we announced in Samoa. And we have signed an MOU with New Zealand to help us better understand our geothermal resource. Grenada will serve as the pilot country for the regional energy initiative of the United

States and will work with New Zealand on Geothermal Energy. We welcome others to join this partnership and this unfolding success-story of Green Grenada.

Mr. President, as we have said before, we wish to recommend the following actions:

- #1. Let us operationalize the Green Climate Fund with a Window for Islands.
- #2. Let us implement 100% renewable energy in island states.
- #3. Let us put a PRICE ON CARBON and stop subsidizing fossil fuels.
- #4. Let us de-carbonize Food Security. Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use, contributes 25% of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Let's have greater support for Climate Smart Agriculture which can deliver the triple win of (1) increasing productivity and incomes, (2) increasing resilience to climate change and (3) reducing or removing carbon emissions. Grenada is pleased to be working with the Government of the Netherlands on the Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance and on the Global Blue Growth and Food Security Initiative.

Blue Growth is vital for the economies of island states around the world and our tri-island state of Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique see ourselves as an "Ocean State" given that our Exclusive Economic Zone in the sea is over 70 times larger than our land mass. Our tri-island state is pleased to host the Secretariat of the Caribbean Challenge Initiative which is supported by the Nature Conservancy, Germany and others. The CCI promotes an enhanced marine environment and Grenada is committed to conserving 20% of its near-shore marine environment. Through reports like the Sunken Billions, the World Bank and FAO have shown that conservation efforts are critical to ensuring maximum economic yield in fisheries.

We have lost 30% of our corals and mangroves in the last 30 years. This is why Grenada welcomes efforts such as the Global Blue Growth Initiative, the Global Partnership for Oceans and efforts by the Economist and US Secretary of State, John Kerry, to bring renewed attention to the Oceans. We look forward to welcoming our partners to Grenada in January 2015 for the launch of the Global Blue Growth and Food Security Initiative.

Mr. President, in closing, Grenada acknowledges the successes of the Samoa Summit and building on the momentum of the Samoa we look forward to the successful conclusion to the sustainable development goals process and leading into COP-21 in Paris next year.

As we move forward, let us remember that a number of the Millennium Development Goals have not been achieved. We have a duty, therefore, to re-examine our approach to peace, security and shared prosperity. We need collective action on a global consensus. We need to act now before it's too late. We must shed the old ways and adopt 21<sup>st</sup> Century approaches for this millennium generation if we are to bequeath them and future generations with the bounty we inherited and the bounty that they deserve.

I thank you.