



Permanent Mission of St. Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations

STATEMENT

BY

**THE HONOURABLE DR. DENZIL L. DOUGLAS
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE,
SUSTAINABLE AND HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT**

OF THE FEDERATION OF ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

AT

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

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**STATEMENT BY
THE RT. HONOURABLE DR. DENZIL L. DOUGLAS
PRIME MINISTER OF ST. KITTS AND NEVIS
AT THE
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UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK,
SEPTEMBER 27, 2013**

Mr. President, Distinguished Secretary General, Esteemed Heads of State and Government, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am particularly pleased to extend congratulations to you, distinguished President, Ambassador John Ashe, on your election to preside over the 68th Session of the General Assembly. I am indeed proud given the stellar service you have rendered to your native land, Antigua and Barbuda and the Latin America and Caribbean region in general. As a member of the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean regional grouping and the wider Caribbean region, as a whole, St. Kitts and Nevis pledges its full support to you throughout your tenure at the helm of this General Assembly. I am confident that your expertise and skills will position you favourably to guide the General Debate and the extensive work programme of the various Committees and Agencies of this august body.

Mr. President

St. Kitts and Nevis wishes to place on record its appreciation to your predecessor the President of the 67th Session, His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremic, for the important contributions that he made to advance the work of this institution during his tenure.

Mr. President

We advance into this 68th Session fully cognizant of the diverse challenges with which we must contend and equally seized of our obligation as a Government and people to contribute to the global priorities that inform the work of this august body. We see the relevance of maintaining sharp focus on those areas that are integral to the national and international development agenda. I refer to such matters as:

- (i) Sustainable Development,
- (ii) Maintenance of international peace and security,
- (iii) Promotion of human rights,

- (iv) Disarmament,
- (v) Promotion of Justice and International Law and
- (vi) Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts.

These, we believe, are core principles to inform any plan of action to advance into the post 2015 era with the confidence that our shared vision for meeting our set goals will be realized.

Mr. President

A few days ago, St. Kitts and Nevis attained another important milestone celebrating three decades of nationhood with a strong commitment to maintain the stability and prosperity of our nation, drawing on our own creativity as a government and a people. This year's presentation, therefore, bears great significance for our proud nation. As one of the smallest member states of the western hemisphere and of this organization, we are pleased with the significant strides that we have made as my Government pursues the process of transformation for sustainability in a nation that is not immune from the global developments that continue to negatively impact our national agenda.

My Government, however, is working assiduously in transforming our former sugar based economy to one that is service oriented driven mainly by tourism and hospitality and supported by international financial services, offshore education services, manufacturing and agriculture. In all of this we are cognizant of the momentum and impact of information and communication technology as a tool that will assist in the development of the economy. As far as the manufacturing sector is concerned, we have developed a cluster of light manufacturing enterprises that service the North and South American and European markets with quality electronic and electrical components for the construction, cable television, aerospace, and aircraft industries. Indeed, our present economic trajectory will ensure that we meet both our Millennium Development Goals as well as our own Sustainable Development Goals in the Post 2015 Development Agenda. That is why the theme of this Session – “The Post 2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage” is perceived to be quite relevant.

Mr. President,

My delegation is pleased that during this session of the General Assembly we will be reviewing progress made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as the target date of 2015 fast approaches. The distinguished Secretary General must be complemented for his initiative in this regard. I am pleased to indicate that St. Kitts and Nevis has made tremendous strides in achieving the first MDG – eradication of extreme poverty. Our government has invested heavily in creating a solid and expansive social safety infrastructure which has assisted the less fortunate to lead dignified lives. We provide subsidized health care for children and the elderly. We assist vulnerable families with the resources to pursue education (school books, school uniforms) and provide them with a nourishing, hot meal each day. We also provide living facilities for the aged and indigent.

Mr. President,

It is the hope of my delegation that, globally, every effort will be made to ensure that all targets are met by the 2015 indicative dead line. Indeed, "The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013" provides a clear indication of exactly where the international community should be directing its focus in this regard.

And so, the world, as a whole has to pay great attention to the most off-track MDGs, and those where progress has been stalled: including those related to hunger, universal access to primary education, child mortality, maternal health, and access to sanitation.

All nations must therefore redouble their efforts to exercise the requisite political will to implement programmes specially designed to meet the established targets and improve the lives of millions in a meaningful way.

Mr. President,

We must never lose sight of the intrinsic linkages that exist between the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in the post 2015 Development agenda. Both processes, though running in parallel, are mutually re-enforcing, in the sense that the latter will accelerate the programmes to meet the targets indicated in the former, while the former will provide valuable lessons necessary for achieving a higher degree of overall success.

Mr. President,

Cognizant of the fact that poverty eradication is intrinsically linked to the attainment of sustainable development, we must therefore all strive to ensure that a balanced approach is taken to blend economic growth, equity, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability as we craft and implement policies to achieve development that is both meaningful and truly sustainable.

Indeed, Mr. President, the Post-2015 Development Agenda must be arrived at through transparent and inclusive inter-governmental negotiations under the United Nations. In this regard, my delegation notes with appreciation the decision at the Special Event on the Follow Up on the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals which was convened earlier this week.

Mr. President,

The Post-2015 Development Agenda should also address other challenges faced by developing countries such as universal access to modern energy services, ensuring food security and nutrition, full and productive employment and decent work for all, skilled jobs and training, agricultural development, building productive capacity, and infrastructure development. My Government has seen the positive impact of its own national initiative geared towards providing the youth with the skills necessary to integrate into the world of work through the People

Empowerment Programme (PEP). To date over two thousand young men and women are reaping the benefits from this initiative.

It is highly important that all Member States of this great organization play an active role in ensuring that the targets identified in the Post -2015 era adequately address the gaps that remain by the indicative deadline for the achievement of the MDGs.

Mr. President,

My delegation would therefore wish to reaffirm its commitment to ensure that Small Island Developing States (SIDS), remain a special case for sustainable development, recognizing our unique characteristics, challenges and vulnerabilities and the ongoing impact of these on our ability to achieve and build resilience. Small Island developing States remain constrained in meeting the economic, environmental and social challenges. While we recognize our own responsibility in overcoming some of these setbacks, we would wish to stress that, in the absence of cooperation and assistance from the international community, in general, success will remain difficult.

Mr. President,

At this juncture, allow me to place on record our appreciation to some of our development partners, who have offered tangible assistance in the fields of agricultural diversification, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development and energy diversification in an economy which relies on fossil fuel consumption, a phenomenon which will positively impact our energy cost reduction efforts as we advance towards the realizing our goal for a full green economy as we endeavour to bring much needed relief for our people by 2015. The contributions of the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan), Japan, the United States of America, the Organization of American States and the European Union in particular have assisted greatly in this regard.

Mr. President,

You will agree that no discussion on the issue of development can progress without reference to the area of health and in particular the chronic illnesses that continue to plague our societies with resultant loss of lives, thus retarding our developmental thrust.

It was just a few days ago, in the margins of this 68th Session of the UN General Assembly, that I had the privilege of addressing a Forum on Non-Communicable Diseases and Disability, held in collaboration with several Permanent Missions, CARICOM Secretariat, PAHO/WHO and the NCD Alliance. The forum was designed to bring focused attention on creating synergies between NCDs and disabilities and examine how health systems can be reoriented and reinforced to ensure equitable access to high quality care and thus advancing development. From this forum we were able to confirm that NCDs are not only driven by ageing, but increasingly and alarmingly so by the growing numbers of cases of juvenile diabetes and the growing number of youth incapacitated by accident injury.

The high incidence of NCDs within the Caribbean also places an increased burden on our open economies, which are highly vulnerable to external shocks and natural disasters, diverting resources which can be allocated to building quality infrastructure and our precious human capital. Indeed, Mr. President, we accept the recommendation of the Report of the Caribbean Commission on Health and Development, that urgent steps must be taken to reverse the trends.

Mr. President,

As we focus strategically on the Millennium Development Goals and the Post 2015 Development Agenda, we cannot lose sight of non-communicable diseases and the real threat that they pose to societies across the globe. And so we are grateful for the attention given, at the United Nations High Level Forum two years ago, to the need for a global response to this problem.

Much work has been undertaken by the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization, and other regional bodies to reverse the high incidence of NCDs in our region, Mr. President. There is now a strong emphasis on testing - since the collection of empirical data is key to proper tracking and analysis. The preparation of strategic plans and budgets; and the incorporation of families and communities in education, prevention, and detection programs, are all pivotal in this regard.

Mr. President

My delegation is convinced that combatting the high incidence of non-communicable diseases must receive greater prominence in the Sustainable Development post 2015 Agenda, Mr. President. It is evident that there is a strong nexus between a nation's health status and its levels of productivity and therefore my delegation subscribes to the notion that a nation's wealth lies in the health of its people. Our High Level Meeting of two years ago was an important first step in this regard, and it is one on which we must continue to build, on an ongoing basis. Mr. President it is clear that we need to adopt a similar strategy to the global response to HIV/AIDS in order to achieve the levels of success in fighting the incidence of persons with NCDs.

I submit respectfully that there are practical lessons to be learned from the experience developed by agencies such as UNAIDS and PAHO, which have touched the lives of millions in a positive manner. It is therefore important for this international body to keep on the front burner a practical strategy to address the high incidence of NCDs within our region and the nations of the world.

Mr. President

As we usher in a dispensation of sustainment we remain cognizant of the inextricable link between development and an environment of peace and security.

Mr. President,

Crime in any society is an unwelcome and destabilizing threat that must be dealt with. Indeed, the ways in which societies are affected at both the micro and the macro levels are known to us all. Entire societies are caused to bear the myriad costs associated with personal injury, psychological insecurity and the related health care repercussions. That is why we, in St. Kitts and Nevis, have placed such great emphasis on effective leadership; clear lines of authority and responsibility; targeted equipment upgrades; expanded and ongoing training; community policing; strengthened relations between the police and the public; and full co-operation, at all levels, between our national police force and our national defense force.

As a result, St. Kitts and Nevis has made tremendous strides in confronting the challenge of crime. Indeed, in the space of just over one year, we were able to see crime plummet by some 53%, convincing us of the importance of the United Nations providing a forum via which member-states might share best practices in this era of globalized criminality. If the challenge is becoming international in scope, so too must be the response.

In this regard, we are equally aware that the socio-economic and political gains that we are trying to achieve in the global community will be illusive if the environment of peace is interrupted by warfare and threats to peaceful co-existence among the world's peoples. St. Kitts and Nevis joins in condemning the atrocities that have recently been perpetrated in Syria and Kenya that have resulted in wanton loss of human lives. Such use of chemical and conventional weapons and resorting to acts of violence and terrorism and their spiraling inhumane effects will ultimately have far-reaching deleterious impact on global safety and security, which must continue to be a concern for all the world's leaders and their people.

Mr. President,

More than any other time in its history the United Nations must be more assertive in executing its mandate as a leading actor in securing world peace. The mechanisms that will justify its *raison d'être*, in this regard, must yield tangible results that will translate into positive outcome to the benefit of humanity. We are aware that effective implementation of the global security initiatives requires strong partnership and cooperation. We must not lose sight of the effectiveness of multilateralism and partnership in addressing the collective priorities of the shared agenda of this Organization. St. Kitts and Nevis appreciates the strides that we have made with the Arms Trade Treaty and would encourage that we move with alacrity to ensure its coming into force. However, as small island states with open borders we see the relevance of establishing international standards and controls that will govern the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons through our ports.

We commend the United States of America for the partnership that has been forged with St. Kitts and Nevis and the other Member States of the Caribbean that form part of the US- Caribbean Basin Security Initiative which, among other things, will be pivotal to our efforts at stemming the illicit flow of foreign made small arms into our region. This initiative has provided the avenues of collaboration in crime prevention and detection as we work together in building capacity of our security forces. This we are convinced will contribute significantly to creating the

enabling environment for sustainable development through the prevalence of peace and security in our communities.

Mr. President,

Our focus is not only on the international dimensions of crime. Indeed, we are mindful of the fact that all over the world women and children are among the most vulnerable in our societies. And so we have instituted a clear and assertive zero tolerance policy in this regard. Violence against women and children must not be seen as either a “personal” or a “family” matter, but instead, it should be seen as a socially destructive behavior demanding judicial intervention. If and where this zero tolerance policy does not yet exist, we strongly urge its embrace and implementation.

Mr. President,

Thirty years ago, St. Kitts and Nevis established diplomatic relations with several countries including the Republic of China on Taiwan. And in the intervening years, this relationship has been mutually beneficial. As the debate on sustainable development unfolds, St. Kitts and Nevis is eminently qualified to speak on the myriad contributions that the Republic of China (Taiwan) is capable of making to the international community. While the international community is preoccupied with ensuring peace and security globally, we can applaud the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) for promoting peace across the Taiwan Strait, and proposing the East China Sea Peace initiative, thus demonstrating a commitment to peace and stability.

Mr. President,

Taiwan is one of the top eighteen economies globally. In addition, Taiwan has worked assiduously to advance the economic interests of countries such as ours. In this regard, we have collaborated on a large number of key projects such as the multi-sectoral Agro-Tourism Development Farm, our high-priority solar energy farm, and an ICT Centre, all designed to advance the social and economic interests of my nation.

Mr. President,

I wish to place on record my delegation’s appreciation to the World Health Organization (WHO) for inviting Taiwan, for five consecutive years, to attend the World Health Assembly as an Observer. We are of the view that Taiwan has adopted a very pragmatic approach to its meaningful participation in UN Specialized Agencies and functional organizations that are critical to the current global efforts to address many issues of mutual concern. My delegation is convinced that the arrangements made for Taiwan’s presence in the World Health Assembly, which have been referred to as the “WHA Model” serve as a useful point of reference for Taiwan’s meaningful participation in other international agencies such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). While on that note, permit me, Mr. President, to commend Mr. Roberto

Kobeh Gonzalez, President of the ICAO Council, for the decision to invite Taiwan to attend this month's 38th ICAO Assembly as a Special Guest.

Taiwan has a great deal to offer the international community in a vast number of areas. Its prolonged exclusion from various United Nations agencies, therefore, serve neither the interests of Taiwan nor those of the global community. In light of this, in the interest of greater international understanding and collaboration, my delegation urges the admission of Taiwan to United Nations agencies without undue delay.

Mr. President,

Germane to this concept of exclusion from the international trading arrangement is the trade embargo imposed on Cuba at the height of the Cold War which remains a matter of concern for St. Kitts and Nevis – as it does to the vast majority of nations represented in this important institution. Our position is based on our commitment to international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and our obligations under same. We, therefore, like so many in this chamber, are concerned over the extraterritorial application and effects of national legislation on the sovereignty of States.

This is a contravention of the tenets of international law regarding the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and harmonious coexistence. In light of the vast number of nations that share this view, therefore, I urge, in the interest of international peace and understanding, that this august body explore new and imaginative means of convincing all involved to bring to a close this unfortunate chapter in hemispheric relations.

The Government of St Kitts and Nevis reiterates its support for General Assembly Resolution 67/4 on the “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”, and once again calls for an immediate end to this unilateral action.

As we move to close the chapter that ushers in a more enlightened era of human existence, St. Kitts and Nevis joins with the Member States of the Caribbean Community in supporting the case for reparation associated with the atrocities of slavery. Although the repercussions of slavery on the lives of those of our ancestors cannot be quantified, we are convinced that the deleterious effects which even now, are translated into much hardship and poverty for the descendents of our ancestors, must be resolved. Mr. President, the time has come.

The world has seen more than its share of conflicts in recent years, Mr. President. In addition, natural disasters, sometimes caused by climate change, continue to wreak havoc in many corners of the globe. All of this speaks to the importance of us marshaling and managing, very carefully, those resources that have been placed under our respective control for the benefit of the people we represent. It speaks to the importance of us being far more responsible stewards of this planet than we have been in the past. And it speaks to our working assiduously, whenever we can, to abate tensions and promote peace.

There can only be change in 2015, as long as we do not fail to take a bold and definitive stance in addressing the ills that stymie our efforts to move forward in achieving our goals!

There must be change in 2015, if we do not fail to pursue the priorities that will eradicate poverty, enhance global peace and security, find alternative means of reducing the impact of climate change and saving our planet from destruction, and reduce elevated incidences of HIV/AIDS and NCDs.

There must be change in 2015, Mr. President, if the agencies of this august body adopt a policy of equity and the determination to execute their mandate to enable the institutionalization of a culture of peace and security, respect for human lives and justice for all.

Let us therefore commit to rise to the challenge and move forward imbued with a renewed sense of focus, determination and urgency to fulfill our set goals.

May all that we say here, Mr. President, bring us closer to this most vital and crucial of ends.

Thank you.

