



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

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**Statement by**  
**The Honourable Patrice Nisbett**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
**of The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis**  
**at the General Debate of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session**  
**of the**  
**United Nations General Assembly,**  
**September 29, 2014**

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

It is indeed an honour for me to address this august body for the first time, since assuming the portfolio of Minister of Foreign Affairs a little over one year ago. I take pleasure, Mr. President, in sharing the perspectives of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis on matters before this sixty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Allow me, Mr. President, to start by congratulating you on your election to the office of President of the General Assembly to steer the course of this 69<sup>th</sup> Session. Indeed, your sterling contribution to your native Uganda, where you served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and your efforts at strengthening the African Union, serve to prepare you for the challenging task of finalising the development of the post 2015 development agenda.

My delegation wishes to commend your predecessor, Mr. John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda for his leadership in presiding over the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. His focus on the development of the sustainable development goals, and other issues of importance to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and developing countries in particular is worthy of high commendation.

The theme of this sixty-ninth session of the UN General Assembly *“Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda”* is quite timely as we enter a new dispensation which reflects global priorities which were not contemplated at the time the MDGs were conceptualised leading up to the year 2000.

As we work on implementing the post-2015 development agenda, we must ensure that the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals recently formulated are effective in building on the foundation laid by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is my delegation's hope that the agenda as developed will be transformative in nature, with a high degree of success in the eradication of poverty and hunger, and promotion of sustained and inclusive economic growth as its overarching objectives.

Mr. President,

We are mindful that MDG 8, which calls for the strengthening of global partnerships, remains one of the “unfinished business” of the Millennium Development Goals, established at the

Millennium Summit in 2000. It is therefore highly important that we take great care in ensuring that the first sixteen (16) goals are buttressed by a robust suite of implementation tools that will effectively serve as the catalyst for achieving success in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. President,

My delegation can never overemphasize the importance of rendering Goal Seventeen (17) effective and operational. Indeed, this goal calls for the strengthening of the means of implementation and the revitalisation of the global partnership for sustainable development.

We are therefore heartened by your expressed plan to convene three High-Level Thematic Debates and one High-Level Event geared towards inter alia, strengthening the means of implementation in order to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions.

Mr. President,

My delegation will pay keen attention to the first event on the means of implementation debate. We are of the view that achieving sustainable development will require mobilization and effective use of financial resources, technology development and transfer, in addition to capacity building at all levels. It will also entail increased investment in the social sectors, infrastructure, community development, climate financing, and the protection of global common goods. The key question before us in relation to means of implementation is how we mobilize the significant sources that will be needed to turn the aspirations of the post-2015 development agenda into tangible outcomes. I wish, Mr. President, to pledge my government's support in advancing the basic thrust of your presidency.

A strengthened global partnership should foster close collaboration between and among governments; provide for an increased role of the private sector; ensure a fair international trading regime; and foster national and foreign direct investments.

Mr. President,

My government wishes to reiterate its firm commitment to doing its part to ensure that we achieve the goals developed to sustain economic and social development, in a manner which will preserve the environment and ensure stable, safe and peaceful societies.

Indeed, Mr. President, since our last address to this august body, St. Kitts and Nevis has solidified its position as a leader in the Caribbean in attracting foreign direct investment, specifically in its tourism infrastructure, and building its industrial base in the light manufacturing - the electronics and electrical component sector. We have also successfully forged public-private partnerships in renewable energy ventures providing sustained growth for our economy.

Mr. President,

One of the peculiar vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States like St. Kitts and Nevis is our susceptibility to economic and environmental shocks, which results in a state of high indebtedness. It is no secret that high public debt affects the ability of governments to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

In the area of economic sustainability, we developed in 2011, and successfully implemented a comprehensive approach to the management of our national debt. Our plan include debt restructuring with international financial institutions, an exchange offer for government bonds, curtailment of public borrowing to sustainable levels, and the creative land-for-debt swap initiative.

I am pleased to report that by the end of June 2014, we had successfully reduced our debt to GDP ratio by 50 percentage points, from over 145 per cent pre restructuring to 95 per cent. I am even more pleased to report that our debt to GDP ratio is projected to decline further to 85 % by the end of 2014.

In spite of our fiscal discipline, however, it is important for us to be mindful of the fact that one severe climate event can erase the gains achieved, effectively sending us into a vicious cycle which makes it difficult, if not impossible to achieve sustainable development on the economic front.

At this juncture, Mr. President, it would be remiss of me if I fail to echo the call for a new paradigm to the assessment of the policy of graduation by using the narrow policy of per capita gross national income to confer "middle income" and "high income" status on developing countries. St. Kitts and Nevis is of the view that this measure is grossly inadequate, and needs to take into account the peculiar vulnerabilities of SIDS.

We commend the Commonwealth Secretariat for the innovative work it has been spear heading to encourage leading international financial institutions to accept a broader matrix including the vulnerability index to correctly assess the true economic situation of SIDS like St. Kitts and Nevis.

I must emphasize, Mr. President, that graduation to a higher income category makes it more difficult to access resources to sustain our economic, social and environmental policy objectives. Borrowing funds at a high rate on the international financial market only serves to perpetuate the vicious cycle of debt and threatens our sustainable development. This, Mr. President runs contrary to the goals and objectives of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

To this end, I call on the international community, including the leading international financial institutions to broaden the scope of assessment of SIDS, in order to avoid the creation of scenarios where debt sustainability measures undertaken at the national level are undermined by policies of the said institutions.

St. Kitts and Nevis stands ready to work with the international community by contributing our ideas to the debate in order to ensure a most favourable outcome.

## Combatting NCDs

Mr. President, my delegation is convinced that a nation's wealth lies in the health of its people; its productive sector. We continue to wrestle with the high incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in our country and region. To this end, we wish to reiterate our call for a strong global response to combating the high incidence of non-communicable diseases in developing countries in particular.

In our last statement to this very body, our prime minister stressed the need for this international body to keep on the front burner a practical strategy to address the high incidence of NCDs within our region and throughout the nations of the world. To this end, I wish to commend the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Ambassador John Ash for convening a number of events focus on this matter of great importance to my delegation.

It is our hope that the final report on the Informal interactive hearing with NGOs, civil society organizations, the private sector and academia on the prevention and control of NCDs that was held in June of this year will serve to build on the outcome of previous initiatives emanating from the High Level Meeting on NCDs held three years ago, and work conducted under the following session.

Mr. President, my delegation is indeed pleased to see the inclusion of non-communicable diseases in the goals and targets for sustainable development as part of the post-2015 development agenda. Indeed we support goal to ***“ensure healthy lives and promote and promote well-being for all at all ages”***. We also support the target to reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being by 2030.

We look to the various specialised bodies of this international organisation for guidance and support as we seek to meet the targets and indicators under this and all goals developed as part of the post-2015 development agenda. We reiterate the call for the strengthening of the means of implementation of the goals and targets, and the revitalisation of the global partnership for sustainable development.

## Climate Change

Climate change remains more than an environmental concern for Small Island developing states like St. Kitts and Nevis. For us we regard it more of a threat to our existence! Indeed, the adverse effects of climate change are well known:

1. persistent adverse weather conditions,
2. floods,
3. extended droughts, and
4. rising sea levels

Mr. President,

My delegation is convinced of the need to preserve our planet Earth for ourselves and generations yet unborn. We have an obligation to combat climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures. Climate change financing and technology transfer will be pivotal to the success of this objective.

We urge widespread acceptance by the international community to creative initiatives such as debt swap for climate adaptation and mitigation. My government is convinced that such proposals developed with assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat provide SIDS with a greater degree of flexibility as we try to achieve sustainable development.

Mr. President, we welcome your commitment to provide appropriate impetus and momentum to the ongoing process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reach a global agreement on climate change by 2015.

#### Peace and Security

Mr. President,

Maintaining peace and security remains one of the main priorities of the United Nations. This ideal is captured in the post-2015 development agenda as SDG No. 16, "*Achieve peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law, effective and capable institutions*". I am pleased to report that at the national level we have implemented a strategy which has seen reduction in violent crime and the strengthening of institutions to sustain peaceful and inclusive societies.

We are grateful to our development partners, the governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Mexico and the Republic of China (Taiwan) for their invaluable assistance in this regard.

Mr. President

Thirty-one years ago our new nation forged a strategic and mutually beneficial relationship with the Republic of China (Taiwan). This relationship has grown by leaps and bounds, and touches all three dimensions of sustainable development. As the dialogue continues on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, St. Kitts and Nevis regards itself suitably qualified to speak on the valuable contribution which the Republic of China (Taiwan) can make to the international community.

At the recently convened SIDS Conference in Samoa, our prime minister had the privilege to speak of the value of the partnership established with the government and private sector of Taiwan in implementing a number of projects in renewable energy, specifically the

establishment of a solar panel manufacturing plant, the outfitting of government buildings and street lights with solar panels. The latter project will assist us in St. Kitts and Nevis to achieve the goal of ensuring access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services for all.

For many years, our government has called for the international community to allow the Republic of China (Taiwan) to participate in the organs of the United Nations system. This call is by no means arbitrary in nature. It has resulted from our partnership in numerous development initiatives across the sustainable development spectrum.

St. Kitts and Nevis is therefore pleased to note that Taiwan was recently invited to attend the Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) for the first time since 1971.

We are equally pleased to note the participation of Taiwan in the World Health Assembly (WHA), and offer our commendation to the Government and people of Taiwan for sharing its expertise in the fields of medicine and civil aviation safety.

At this juncture we are convinced that the time is right for this spirit of understanding and inclusion to extend to the area of the ongoing negotiations in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). My government is equally convinced that the experiences gained by Taiwan in its strategy on building environmental and economic resilience can be shared with the international community through the UNFCCC.

Indeed, while the international community is focused on maintaining peace and security, we are pleased to underscore the active role played by the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in promoting peace and security across the Taiwan Strait and for proposing the East China Sea Peace Initiative, thus demonstrating its commitment to international peace and security.

Mr. President

My Government remains concerned by the decades old unilateral trade embargo imposed on Cuba. This relic of the Cold War runs counter to principles of international law; principles which under-gird the United Nations system. We stand by our sister nations in CARICOM and the G77 and China and reiterate our call for creative ways to resolve this perennial issue which adversely affects the tenor of Hemispheric relations.

Mr. President

My delegation recognises the challenging weeks and months ahead as we embark in earnest to implement the post-2015 development agenda. We offer our fullest support in this regard. Such support is critical to the successful implementation of the development agenda. May we as an international community redouble our efforts in a manner which will redound to the benefit of developed and developing countries alike.

I thank you!