



STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GRENADA**

**AT THE
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 64TH SESSION
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to add Grenada's voice to the many warm congratulations offered you on your election as President of the 64th General Assembly. Dr Treki, Grenada looks forward to working with you, and pledges to support your leadership as you exercise impartial stewardship over this fine institution. Equally, we commend your predecessor, Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockman for his dedication and conviction in pursuing the vision of the United Nations as a home for social justice for all, particularly those most burdened.

Mr. President,
Through you, Grenada wishes to highly commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon and his staff for their performance over the past year, advancing the work of this organization and "*Delivering As One*". Mr. Secretary-General, we thank you for your interest and participation in the just concluded Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Summit on Climate Change, which Grenada chaired. We wish you and the secretariat every continued success.

Mr. President,
The challenges of the global community are mirrored in our regional and national context. Fortunately, we have no better place than these hallowed walls to continue the long and important journey of building a better world. We cannot respond to one challenge and choose to ignore another, because all are interconnected. Indeed, working together is the *raison d'être*, the essence of *united in United Nations*.

Mr. President,
Climate Change is rightfully described as the most urgent threat facing mankind, and at least for the next several months, it will remain at the top of the global diplomatic and negotiating agenda. But what is the challenge of climate change if not a risk to development, security and peace? What is the threat of climate change, if not a threat to the very notion of human survival and ecological balance? For small island states, this threat is particularly pronounced.

Today, I address this assembly on the heels of two very important responses to climate change: the AOSIS Summit on Climate Change and the UN Secretary General's Climate Change Summit. What is clear from these well-attended global meetings, is that for developing countries such as Grenada, the alarm has been sounded. The alarm that climate change is bearing down on our countries, it is undermining our potential for economic recovery in the short term, and in the longer term. And it is compounding the efforts at sustainable development as set out in the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation.

In the case of Grenada, this is due to our dependence on our natural resource base, which supports agriculture and tourism. Together they contribute more than 40 percent of the GDP, and are extremely vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change-induced storms, hurricanes and other economically-disruptive events. The 2004 Hurricane Ivan brought home this reality with damages estimated at 204% of GDP at the time. The country is still recovering from this. Grenada is not unique among small island states worldwide in experiencing these impacts.

Mr. President, the gap in the climate change reality between member-states already impacted and all others need to be urgently bridged. If we fail to do this, the UN itself will have to bear the consequences for the humanitarian and environmental crisis resulting from islands no longer inhabitable.

When my Prime Minister, the Honourable Tillman Thomas, addressed the Closing Session of the Secretary-General's Summit on Tuesday, he spoke on behalf of the most vulnerable states. For these 80 or more poor, island and landlocked states, 2.0 degrees Celsius temperature rise is unacceptable. Our safety and survival will most certainly be at risk. That is why we insist on a global commitment of an average temperature increase of no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, accompanied by appropriate

midterm targets of more than 45% Greenhouse Gas emissions reduction below 1990 levels by 2020 and more than 95% by 2050.

These reduction levels respond to our vulnerabilities, and surely, in a United Nations system to which we all belong, it is unthinkable that known threats will be allowed to turn into grave risks. We must solve the climate change crisis and we must do it *now*. Estimates place the cost of financing adaptation and mitigation at about 1% of industrialized world gross domestic product. That is, for every million dollars of GDP, \$10,000 would be contributed. Given the moral principle of historical responsibility, this is affordable by any measure.

With the adoption of the AOSIS Climate Change Declaration, small island states have said: we will not stand by and watch our islands sink, see our livelihoods disappear, and witness our children made homeless due to the effects of human-induced climate change.

We again call on the international community to stand in support of the most vulnerable, so as to ensure that the targets set forth in the AOSIS Climate Change Declaration are agreed to in Copenhagen. Grenada will continue to play its part in highlighting the needs of the most vulnerable while advocating for strengthening their capacity for resilience.

In continuing to chair the AOSIS, Grenada will always advocate for sustainable development goals as well as agreements in the Copenhagen negotiations that are commensurate to the level of the threat.

Mr. President,

The Financial and Economic crises continue to undermine economies worldwide. The green shoots of recovery need to blossom everywhere. Grenada continues to insist, as our Prime Minister Tillman Thomas stated in the June Summit on the crisis, that the global financial and economic architecture needs fundamental and far reaching reforms. Changes are needed in its rules, regulations and governance in order to facilitate effective participation of small economies which suffer the effects of the crises harder and longer. Here, we wish to echo the call for reform of the International Financial Institutions particularly for a review of the policy conditions attached to lending by the International Monetary Fund.

Mr. President,

Grenada continues to pursue sustainable economic development and prosperity for our people as they show resilience to economic setbacks. A study by the FAO shows that Latin America and the Caribbean were the most successful regions before the surge in food prices in 2008. That is affirmation of our efforts. However, another study showed that in times of crisis, social spending does not favour the poor and development goals are stymied. This is our fear. It is also our reality.

That is why the Government introduced a package of measures, greatly supported by the Trinidad and Tobago Petroleum Fund financing, which has begun to lay the basis for developing a low-carbon and rights-based economic development model. In this regard, we wish to thank the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for its continued assistance to Grenada and to the Caribbean region through their contribution to this fund.

We are grateful for the Petro Caribe agreement with the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela through which several Caribbean countries are able to purchase oil on softer terms.

Mr. President,

Grenada has put in place strategic initiatives that include revitalizing the agricultural sector; increasing labour productivity; diversifying the export services sector; strengthening the national investment environment and modernizing our tax system. In implementing these, we seek partnerships with the international community and the United Nations System.

Trade continues to be of major importance to Grenada. We are experiencing severe setbacks from the loss of preferential treatment in agricultural markets. We are among the smallest and most open markets in the world. And yet, larger countries contest whatever benefits we receive to offset the disadvantages of small economic size, which is compounded by the high transportation cost and energy prices.

Grenada is pleased that the United Nations System continues to pursue economic growth and development. We support the perspective that any outcome in Copenhagen must be a development outcome, for each is connected to the other. We urge support towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. We have made progress by achieving 80% primary school enrollment by reducing violence against women, and scaled up access towards anti-retroviral drugs for persons living with HIV/AIDS. Grenada, however, strives to achieve a faster rate of poverty eradication but this is hampered by revenue reduction from the economic downturn and by our heavy debt burden now standing at 107% of GDP.

That is why we add our voice to the call for a review of the criteria for determining middle income status. For while we welcome efforts to assist Highly Indebted Poor Countries, states, such as Grenada, currently referred to as Highly Indebted Middle Income Countries are deserving of special attention.

Mr. President,

The Government of Grenada favours peace and reconciliation, aspiring to bring people together to work for a common good. It is from such a platform we pursue true partnership for development, beginning with the private sector, trade unions and civil society. Together then, as one nation, we face the international community.

Development is important in its own right. It also serves as a guarantor for peace and security. We urge the United Nations to continue its efforts in peace building and peace keeping. My country continues to support these UN efforts in the Caribbean region where we have contributed a small number of officers to this effort.

We welcome the reopening of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Prevention in Barbados to serve the Eastern Caribbean region, and highlight the need for more intervention to stop drug trafficking. In our region, small arms proliferation is as lethal as nuclear weapons. So while we welcome the unanimously adopted Security Council Resolution No.1887 on nuclear disarmament, shepherded by President Obama, we in the Caribbean call for an agreement on small arms trade.

Grenada again calls to the attention of this Assembly the need to ensure the "protection of the Caribbean Sea." The states of the Caribbean Community and other members of the Association of Caribbean States, depend on the tremendous benefits from the pristine waters of the Caribbean Sea. Yet these ocean-based resources are threatened by the transshipment of nuclear and other hazardous waste materials through our waters. We look forward to the General Assembly to strengthen the resolution on this issue and to ensure the threat is removed as soon as possible.

Mr. President, in what U.S. President Barack Obama calls the new era of engagement, we believe that we face three major undertakings: First, to respond to whatever threatens us at a level commensurate to the threat; Second, to strengthen the institutional capability of the UN to do so; and, third, in the sacredness of this grand institution, to inspire humanity. In this endeavour Grenada is guided by its national values, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, its participation in the hemispheric system and the Caribbean regional integration process. Consequently, Mr. President, we reject the removal of the duly elected Head of State in Honduras and call for the immediate restoration of President Jose Manuel Zelaya to the position which he was legitimately elected.

The maintenance of the 40 year economic embargo against Cuba and the failure to bring into being a homeland and state for the Palestinian people, despite numerous and unanimous United Nations Resolutions on both, remain a deep concern; for they violate the spirit and letter of international law on which this organization is founded.

We urge an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba and call for the normalization of relations between both countries. We call for a sincere engagement to resolve the long-standing Palestinian-Israeli and wider Middle East conflict. Resolution of these entrenched conflicts will generate momentum needed for resolving similar conflicts in other regions in Africa, Asia and elsewhere.

Mr. President,

The UN plays a critical role in every facet of global affairs, that is its strength. To become more effective, the UN must necessarily become stronger. This is why the resolution on system-wide coherence is timely and it has our support.

Likewise, the reform of the Security Council must not be put off for another sixteen years. Reform must mean greater democratization by removing the veto, enlarging permanent and non-permanent categories, and making operating rules and procedures transparent.

Grenada is proud to continue playing its role at the United Nations. We support the pursuit of international peace and security, the rule of law, the fight against terrorism, and for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of human rights. We support the agenda of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Group of 77 and China. We support the just ambitions of Africa, and we proudly support the initiative of the Government of South Africa to mark and celebrate, across the globe, July 18th as Nelson Mandela Day, a day of selfless giving.

We welcome the UN's support for the initiative to establish the Permanent Memorial to Slavery and the Slave Trade – *Lest we forget!* This Memorial is addressed to all humanity that we may draw the lessons of yesteryear for our empowerment. We thank all member states who have already contributed and we encourage others to support the Memorial Fund.

Mr. President,

Grenada continues to value the role of the United Nations as the preeminent institution for effecting multilateral diplomacy. We support its ability to ensure international peace and stability, and to accord a voice to all sovereign states as enshrined in its charter.

We have made significant and meaningful progress in previous general assemblies. Let this 64th Session be another outstanding forward movement in meeting the most pressing global challenges of our time.

Thank you.