



*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



STATEMENT BY

**THE HON. DAME BILLIE A. MILLER, M.P.
SENIOR MINISTER AND MINISTER OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE
OF BARBADOS**

TO THE

**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE
SIXTIETH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

SEPTEMBER 22, 2005

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK**

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Mr. President,

I join with other delegations in congratulating you on your election to preside over the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Barbados delegation's appreciation is also extended to our outgoing President, H.E. Mr. Jean Ping, the Foreign Minister of Gabon for the outstanding work he has done in guiding the Assembly during the previous session and particularly in the preparations for the High Level Meeting.

Last week our Heads of State and Government in an attempt to define and articulate a global consensus adopted an outcome document representing the determination of the vast majority to make progress toward full achievement of the goals and targets inspired by the Millennium Declaration as well as a number of decisions on United Nations reform. Barbados, as part of the tremendous efforts made by many, had hoped for bolder and more ambitious commitments, particularly regarding development. In all of the circumstances we accept that the outcome of the High Level Meeting provides a platform for coordinated international action in response to the complex and interconnected global challenges confronting this, and future generations.

Mr. President,

The Millennium Development Goals are now recognized as the world's time-bound quantifiable targets for addressing poverty in its many dimensions of hunger, disease, lack of access to health care and education, gender inequality and environmental degradation. Progress on their achievement has been far from uniform across the world, or for that matter, across the goals. Unless action is taken on a much broader front and at a much faster pace, the eminently laudable words of the Declaration will serve only as grim reminders of human needs neglected and of numerous promises unfulfilled. The Secretary-General has stated that our generation, with the combination of resources and technology at its disposal, must be the first to make the right of development a reality for everyone and to free the entire human race from war.

Progress toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Barbados is encouraging. Although the regional report of the United Nations Development Programme presents an optimistic outlook for most Caribbean countries in respect of the first five goals, the region faces severe challenges and constraints to their achievement. Foremost among them and beyond our control is our vulnerability to economic shocks, and to every natural disaster

known to mankind, be it hurricane, volcanic eruption, mudslide, earthquake or flood. Equally challenging is the fuller and more effective integration of Barbados in the globalized economy, for which a successful outcome of the next Doha Development Round of talks on trade liberalization is crucial.

Mr. President,

Permit me to refer to an outstanding omission from the Millennium Development Goals, that of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Indeed, the exclusion was so stark that the UN Secretary-General himself has stated that "The Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not squarely addressed. And that means stronger efforts to promote women's rights, and greater investment in education and health, including reproductive health and family planning."

We must seize the opportunity presented by this current review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals to mainstream sexual and reproductive health and rights by adopting a universal access target or indicator that can be used to facilitate the monitoring of progress in this area and to hold governments accountable.

Barbados takes the position that women are central to the successful implementation of the MDGs. After all, women of childbearing age constitute a billion of the world's poorest people and for this group, sexual and reproductive health issues are at the fore of problems of ill health and loss of productivity. Women living in poverty are not usually aware of their sexual and reproductive rights and are often ignorant about the services to which they have a right of access. Similarly, poor women, and in particular poor young women, are highly susceptible to contracting HIV/AIDS despite the prevalence of preventive measures.

I feel compelled to support the call for mobilizing new resources for improved sexual and reproductive health services for women and men worldwide. Individuals, NGOs and governments in developing countries are already contributing more than seventy-five percent to current expenditures in this area. It is certainly time for developed countries to live up to the pledges they made at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.

Mr. President,

Central to the global partnership for development which is embodied in the 8th MDG, are the commitments by developing countries to pursue sound macroeconomic policies to make the most creative use of our limited endowments, to respect human rights and ensure that our material development takes place within the context of social justice, commitments that Barbados has proudly upheld since becoming independent in 1966.

By the same token, developed countries must fulfill their obligations, made at numerous UN summits and conferences on trade, debt and finance, and in particular their pledge to honour the longstanding target of 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product to Official Development Assistance.

Increases in ODA will not be sufficient to achieve the sustained economic growth and development that we all seek. It will also be necessary for the international community to address the indebtedness of poor and middle income developing countries; promote foreign direct investment flows to a broader range of developing countries; confront serious global environmental problems such as climate change; combat HIV/AIDS; and

reform multilateral trading arrangements as well as systemic deficiencies in the global economic and financial system.

These are the real threats to our human security as we see it in the Caribbean.

The Doha Development Round launched by the World Trade Organization in 2001 is so called precisely because Trade Ministers deliberately sought to place development at the centre of multilateral trade negotiations. This decision inspired new hope in developing countries that we would be afforded the opportunity to participate more effectively and beneficially in the new global economic system. Regrettably, some of our developed country counterparts seem to have reneged on their commitment. We are still locked in a fierce struggle at the World Trade Organization to persuade those countries to rise above their narrow self-interests and embrace positions which would allow for the creation of a more just global economic order.

Barbados fears that we could squander yet another opportunity genuinely to involve developing countries in the multilateral trading system. We do not believe that the international community can continue to ignore this fact.

Furthermore, we are far from convinced that the High-level meeting of last week fully refocused global attention on matters of development, and rescued from obscurity the global development agenda, which has unfortunately been overtaken by a narrowly defined anti-terrorism agenda.

"It is time to put the Global Development Agenda, including that for the world's smallest and most vulnerable societies, back on track." These are the words of the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Rt. Hon. Owen Arthur.

Mr. President,

Barbados considers that peace and collective security, human rights and the rule of law represent, in addition to development, a strong foundation on which the United Nations can assist the international community in building a stronger world. Issues of terrorism, responsibility to protect, disarmament and non-proliferation, also need to be addressed.

Mr. President,

Terrorism affects all countries both large and small, and all countries have an obligation to the international community to ensure that the perpetrators of acts of terrorism do not find safe haven and succour within their borders.

While we believe that the United Nations should strongly and unequivocally issue a condemnation of terrorism in all of its forms, care must be taken to formulate an unambiguous definition that would provide a basis for a comprehensive Convention. This would rightly place the United Nations at the heart of the fight against terrorism, signaling a multilateral approach to this scourge.

Closely linked to the issue of terrorism is that of disarmament and non-proliferation. Action taken by the United Nations must be clear and firm, and efforts must be redoubled to find compromises that would facilitate progress. The Caribbean remains a major route for international narco-traffickers, and suffers from the destabilising effects of the parallel illegal trade in small arms promoted by the same transnational criminal elements.

The absence of concerted international action against small arms trafficking places the peace-loving societies of the small Caribbean states at great risk.

Small arms proliferation and the violence that accompanies it impact

negatively on our development, security and human rights, and pose a severe threat to the peaceful, stable and sustainable development of Caribbean democracies. Barbados supports the call for the negotiation of a new international instrument on the marking and tracing of weapons. This is an urgent priority which will provide the international community with an effective means of monitoring the movement and proliferation of small arms and taking comprehensive interdiction and enforcement action against illegal traders.

Mr. President,

Barbados remains resolute in its rejection of the continued use of the Caribbean Sea for the transshipment of nuclear and radioactive waste. This high-risk practice poses grave danger to our region in the event that there is an accident, a natural disaster or a terrorist attack.

The Secretary-General has emphasised that if the United Nations is to be a useful instrument for its members, and is to successfully address the challenges facing humanity, then it must be fully adapted to the needs and circumstances, not only of today, but tomorrow as well. Barbados shares this view. Reform should not be seen as an end in and of itself, but as a means

toward achieving the goals we set ourselves in 2000 in the Millennium Declaration to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing the priorities of the world's peoples. Reform should also seek to enhance the role of the United Nations in global affairs, to create the conditions for more democratic and transparent decision-making, and provide a forum for the full and equal participation of small states.

Barbados believes that the main organs of the United Nations should be strengthened. This will require the revitalization of the General Assembly to make it the chief deliberative and policy-making body of the organization as envisaged in the UN Charter. It will further require the reform of the Security Council to make it more representative of current global geopolitical realities as well as more transparent in its decision-making. Small states should be represented continuously in the membership of the Council, and any arrangements for the selection of the non-permanent members of a reformed Council should be so formulated.

We are convinced that the Economic and Social Council should play a larger role in policy-making on international economic and social matters, and the promotion of improved global economic and social governance. ▲

restructured Economic and Social Council should find its voice again as a vibrant forum for economic policy dialogue, for promoting increased guidance and coordination to the UN Funds, Programmes and Agencies, and for monitoring the implementation and follow-up of the Millennium Development Goals and other major elements of the global development order.

Mr. President,

If the United Nations is to undertake fully and effectively the demanding responsibilities with which it has been charged, then it must be provided with the required level of resources and the Secretary-General must be given appropriate managerial authority. The Barbados delegation intends to participate actively in the delineation of these issues during this sixtieth session.

As a small state, Barbados believes that a strong multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core, is our strongest protection from the unilateral pursuits of the powerful. We are unwavering in our commitment to the precepts of multilateralism, and to the belief that no other international institution is better suited or equipped to meet the diverse demands for

global peace, security and development than this organization. As a member of the United Nations, Barbados must be assured that its voice will continue to be heard regardless of size or economic power.

This is a struggle from which we are not at liberty to abstain.

I thank you Mr. President.