



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PERMANENT MISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
820 Second Avenue, 5th Floor • New York, N.Y. 10017 • Tel.: (212) 697-7620 • Fax: (212) 682-3580

PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

STATEMENT

by

Senator The Honourable Knowlson Gift

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

in the General Debate

at the

**60th Regular Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

NEW YORK

Friday September 23rd, 2005

Mr. President,

1. It is an honour for me to extend sincere congratulations on your election to the Presidency of the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

2. Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping for his extraordinary dedication and leadership during the 59th Session.

3. Mr. President, I also wish to express my Government's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan for his tireless efforts aimed at strengthening multilateralism and upholding the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

4. Five years ago at the Millennium Summit, world leaders reaffirmed their faith in the United Nations and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

5. While there has been progress in some areas, much remains to be done to bring about a full realization of the ambitious goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration.

6. The promise of the global partnership to realize the Millennium Development Goals remains unfulfilled for the vast majority of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean where, more than one billion people combined, still live below the poverty line. For the Caribbean region, in particular, challenges remain in the area of trade, where the rapid erosion of tariff preferences for primary commodities such as bananas and sugar, have been extremely prejudicial to the socio-economic development of many CARICOM countries.

7. The Caribbean region has also been affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has killed over 20 million men, women and children worldwide. The implicit threat to economic and social stability, human development and security, cannot be underestimated or denied.

8. The target of 0.7% of gross national income for overseas development assistance also remains an elusive goal, although there have been encouraging signs recently such as the commitment made by the G-8 at the Gleneagles Summit, and other developed countries to meet this target by the year 2015. These commitments have been reiterated in the 2005 Outcome Document.

9. At the same time, we have been increasingly confronted with humanitarian emergencies caused by devastating natural disasters with the resultant internal displacement of peoples. Once again, we wish to express our sympathy to the Government and people of the United States of America in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

10. In our own CARICOM sub-region, we remain particularly vulnerable to the devastating effects of hurricanes. In light of the extensive damage inflicted on the sister island of Grenada last year, we urge the United Nations, the international community and donor agencies, to give priority attention to the CARICOM sub-region in the areas of disaster preparedness and post recovery assistance.

Mr. President,

11. The rise of global terrorism, the threat of the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and the concomitant prospect of them falling into the hands of non-state actors, have emerged as issues of extreme urgency. The spread of small arms and light weapons – the preferred weapons of choice in many intra-state conflicts - also poses a threat to the security of many countries. In this regard, CARICOM is particularly concerned with the increasing incidence of violent crime caused by the presence of illegal firearms and its association with the illicit drug trade.

12. The confluence of all these inter-connected threats and challenges, as daunting as they may seem, can and must be countered and effectively addressed. We must, therefore, demonstrate the political will and commitment to act collectively; to develop national and regional strategies with renewed resolve, at the global level, to support robust multilateralism, with a strong and effective United Nations at its center. No one State, no matter how powerful, can act wholly by itself, to resolve these common problems on its own.

13. There is also simply, **Mr. President**, no legitimate alternative to the United Nations, no comparable multilateral institution, where all member states meet, deliberate, advance and harmonize their views and interests, and negotiate and adopt instruments for collective action to the benefit of all.

Mr. President,

14. Last week, in adopting the **Outcome Document**, we agreed to a 'road map,' as it were, of measures required to reorient the United Nations to meet today's challenges.

15. Even as we reaffirm our faith in the United Nations, and our commitment to a more robust multilateralism, and even as we work towards a more effective United Nations through implementing the **Outcome Document**, we must recall that the main purpose of last week's meeting was to review the progress made since the Millennium Summit adopted the MDG's five years ago. Indeed, it is the overall improvement in the lives of all our peoples, in whose name we are gathered here, that history will ultimately judge, or condemn us.

16. Permit me therefore to offer some views on issues that Trinidad and Tobago considers paramount, and on the principles that should serve as a guide for our future deliberations. These must of necessity include the following:

- The imperative of recommitting ourselves, as a matter of priority, to the full realization of the development goals and objectives that have emerged from the major United Nations Conferences and Summits, including the MDG's;
- Greater democratization of all United Nations organs and related bodies, both in terms of their composition and their mode of operation;
- Strict observance for the rule of international law and justice; **and**
- Respect for the commonly shared values on which the United Nations is founded.

Mr. President,

17. Development must remain central to the Agenda of the United Nations.

18. Trinidad and Tobago supports the increased attention of the international community towards Africa in overcoming its developmental challenges, and in providing that continent with the increased resources needed to enable it to fully implement the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

19. We particularly welcome the commitment in the **Outcome Document** to the implementation of the **Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**, and call for the full and effective implementation of the commitments, programmes and targets contained in the Mauritius Strategy adopted at the International Meeting to review the implementation of the **Barbados Programme of Action**.

Mr. President,

20. Trinidad and Tobago has demonstrated remarkable strength and resilience in the face of a global environment characterized by rapid economic, social and other changes. We have embarked on the road to **developed nation** status by the year 2020 or earlier.

21. Our Vision 2020, includes the evolution of a technologically-driven, knowledge-based society, a highly productive and globally competitive economy, and the provision of a standard of living comparable to that of the developed world. To achieve this vision, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is developing its human capital by creating a virtually seamless educational system from the primary to the tertiary level, with increasing emphasis on information technology and other related subjects. In this way we will ensure that our young people can become an integral part of the global labour force with the necessary skills to compete locally, regionally, and internationally.

22. Our developmental agenda is not centred solely on the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It is, as my distinguished Prime Minister stated from this very rostrum, one year ago, and I quote:

“Part and parcel of a pan-Caribbean agenda, to which we are irrevocably and solidly committed...and in which the development of Trinidad and Tobago and CARICOM is intertwined.”

23. We therefore remain committed to the integration of the Caribbean region through the instrumentality of CARICOM. To this end, Trinidad and Tobago has provided substantial financial and economic assistance to our CARICOM neighbours through a variety of mechanisms, including capital market activities, direct foreign investment, debt relief, and direct bilateral assistance.

24. We have also provided extensive hurricane relief, as well as assistance to the private sector in CARICOM to strengthen their export capability.

25. As an energy surplus country, Trinidad and Tobago has, through its own **Petroleum Stabilisation Fund**, made financial assistance available to CARICOM countries to the tune of some US\$48 million per annum, and this, without any conditionalities.

Mr. President,

26. No development and security assessment in our sub-region would be complete without consideration of the grave political, economic, social and security crisis that confronts the Haitian people.

27. We look forward to the holding of free, fair, democratic and inclusive elections in Haiti, and to the installation of a truly democratically elected Government in that nation, so that Haiti can once again sit in the Councils of CARICOM.

28. Trinidad and Tobago and other CARICOM States remain committed over the long term to securing the progress and future of the Haitian people. We therefore urge the United Nations system and the international donor community to provide the necessary support to Haiti in the post-election period. Effective assistance, the disbursement of funds pledged, and the release of other resources, would ensure the progress of a nation currently overwhelmed by daunting challenges.

Mr. President,

29. In the area of disarmament, we share the disappointment of many Member States at our failure to demonstrate the necessary political will to ensure the consensus adoption of tangible and substantive results in the NPT Review Conference and in the **Outcome Document**.

Mr. President,

30. Trinidad and Tobago reiterates its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and is committed to doing its part to eradicate this scourge from our world. In this vein, we look forward to the early conclusion of a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

31. In addition, we welcome the action taken by members of the international community to combat terrorism, but would wish to reiterate that the human rights and the civil and political rights of individuals must be respected in the course of any counter-terrorism actions taken by Member States of the international community.

Mr. President,

32. As a small island developing state we face difficulties associated with the evils of the drug trade and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to stem the tide of criminal activity within our society.

Mr. President,

33. Trinidad and Tobago believes that an international order based on the rule of law must be observed in relations between and among States. This fundamental pillar is indispensable for the proper functioning of the international system. In their relations, States must have regard, at all times, for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law.

34. We reaffirm, in particular, those principles relating to the sovereign equality of all Member States of the United Nations, non-interference in the internal affairs of Members, respect for their political and territorial integrity, the right of peoples to self-determination, and recourse to peaceful means for the settlement of disputes.

35. We also reaffirm the important role of the General Assembly in the development of international treaties.

Mr. President,

36. Trinidad and Tobago expresses its deep regret at the failure of the **Outcome Document** to include any reference to the International Criminal Court and the question of impunity.

37. In this regard, we call on all Member States of the United Nations to become Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in order to ensure that it becomes a truly global instrument for the trial of those accused of committing crimes that affront the conscience of all humanity.

38. My country welcomes the cooperation between the International Criminal Court and the United Nations, which was highlighted earlier this year when the Security Council decided to refer the situation in Darfur to the Court. We look forward to increased opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between these two important global institutions in putting an end to such crimes, and to the culture of impunity that has for so long accompanied them.

Mr. President,

39. Trinidad and Tobago reaffirms its commitment to the reform and strengthening of the United Nations. We share the view that the reform of the United Nations must seek to reinforce and consolidate the democratic foundation upon which this organization was founded.

40. We are of the view that cardinal to the reform agenda must be the revitalization and restoration of the role and authority of the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations.

41. Trinidad and Tobago supports the comprehensive reform of the Security Council. In this regard, we wish to underline the importance of the international community adopting a comprehensive set of reform measures. It is imperative that expansion should proceed on the basis of making the Council more representative of the general membership of the United Nations. It should contribute to a greater democratization of its functioning. It should impart greater legitimacy and transparency to its decisions, and it should be achieved through the broadest possible consultation.

42. Trinidad and Tobago also looks forward to participating in the discussions concerning the reform of the UN Human Rights machinery and on the pending issues relating to the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. President,

43. Trinidad and Tobago commends the Secretary-General for his on-going efforts to enhance the effective management of the United Nations.

44. An efficient, effective, well-resourced Secretariat, which is accountable to the General Assembly, is indispensable to achieving the objectives of a strengthened organization.

45. Trinidad and Tobago welcomes the Secretariat and management reform proposals in the **Outcome Document** as a first step to a necessary thorough debate and discussion, and we look forward to participating actively in these negotiations.

46. It is imperative, however, that these proposals meet the test of viability, that they have the sanction of the established intergovernmental process, and that they do not individually or collectively seek to derogate, diminish or further marginalize the role of the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

47. As we embark on the path of implementation of the **Outcome Document**, we must spare no effort to ensure that the future of the United Nations is not compromised by the exigencies of the moment. Institutional renewal, a strengthened United Nations, and a robust multilateralism must allow us to forge a truly effective global response and commitment to common threats and challenges that confront us.

48. Trinidad and Tobago pledges to do its part to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in the common service of all our peoples.

Thank You.