

**STATEMENT**

*by*

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*of*

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

*to*

**THE UNITED NATIONS  
HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE  
ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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Madam President,

As this is the first time that I have the honour to address you in your current capacity, let me extend warm and sincere congratulations on your election to preside over the deliberations of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The delegation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines extends best wishes for a successful tenure, and we offer our support of policies, programmes, practices that objectively advance the welfare of the disadvantaged of the world.

Madam President, this august body ought to be congratulated for frontally putting on the agenda this issue of international migration, contextualizing it within a developmental frame. We share the view of Secretary —General Annan when he expressed the hope that this High Level Dialogue "will be a beginning, not an end". Of course, there are precursors to this encounter since this matter has occupied international attention for a long time. However, it does allow the global community the opportunity to address this issue in a collective manner that can create the political will, thereby permitting the mobilization of relevant and requisite resources.

Although a tiny nation in the global scheme of things, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has a historical and contemporary experience with migration which is large. Our approach to this matter, deriving from this experience, is essentially humanist, and we humbly suggest that this is a philosophical prism through which this issue can be viewed.

Madam President, the complex dialectic of immigration and emigration which constitutes migration demands an appreciation of the context of this phenomenon. If we accept the thesis of "push-pull" factors at work, clearly we must also acknowledge the connection between underdevelopment ("push") and development ("pull"); that the relatively high standard-of-living of developed countries cannot, in historical and contemporary terms, be separated from the low standard-of-living of underdeveloped and under-developing countries. That is why issues of economic exploitation — whatever the modus, trade imbalances, poor working conditions, low wages, etc., are inseparable from the issue before us. This is why, Madam President, the issue of reparation must be part of this dialogue.

The humanist perspective insists that this issue be addressed within the framework of a reconfiguration of the world's resources. This is the axis on which the dialogue must spin, if it is to have meaning. To do otherwise will be to perpetuate an injustice against "The Wretched of the Earth", to borrow from a Caribbean son (Frantz Fanon).

Madam President, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines places no barriers on emigrants, persons wishing to leave our country criminals excepted, naturally. But, bearing in mind that emigrants include well-trained nationals, produced at considerable cost to our nation, we subscribe to the view that appropriate protocols should be established. We were very involved in the development of the COMMONWEALTH TEACHER RECRUITMENT PROTOCOL adopted by Commonwealth Ministers of Education on September 01,

2004. Of note also is the May 18, 2003 adoption of the COMMONWEALTH CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH WORKERS. This matter of protocols must be a focal point of our discussion.

Immigration is understandably more complex since it raises other issues, among which is security. In other contexts, though not in ours, the matter of xenophobia is of relevance. While we remain receptive to persons from all parts of the world, including retirees who enjoy the tranquility and weather of our beloved homeland, we, of course, reserve the right of scrutiny and due diligence. This brings to the fore the issue of bilateral co-operation /agreement, and hence an international dimension. It is noteworthy that our country operates under the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which established the Caricom Single Market and Economy. This Treaty makes provision under Articles 45 and 46 for the movement of CARICOM nationals. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, we have passed the requisite legislation in support of certain categories of persons wishing to work and operate in our country.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines affirms its support of the intent and thrust of the April 2006 Brussels Declaration of the African Caribbean and Pacific Countries on this issue.

In conclusion, Madam President, it is necessary for this dialogue to continue and for us to implement as speedily as possible the recommendations of this encounter. In so doing, we must bear

always in mind the conditions which give rise to the phenomenon which occupies our attention today. I thank you.