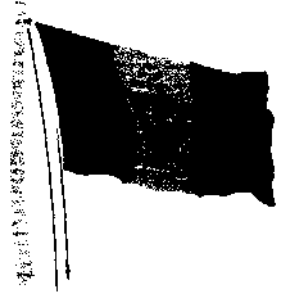




Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations



STATEMENT BY

THE RT. HON. OWEN ARTHUR

PRIME MINISTER

BARBADOS

AT THE HIGH LEVEL PLENARY MEETING

OF THE

SIXTIETH SESSION OF

THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SEPTEMBER 14, 2005

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Fellow Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today we gather, as a family of nations, to take stock of the progress that has been made in fulfilling the commitment which was given, as part of our celebration of the start of a new century, to bring about a dramatic improvement in the condition of mankind everywhere.

It is important that this meeting does not become just a theatre of the absurd – an occasion for expressing angst at what has not been achieved and for giving new commitments which we know will not be honoured.

It is time that we begin to hold some common ground and use it as a beachhead from which to launch our drive for progress.

Almost exactly one year ago, Hurricane Ivan devastated the Grenadian society. Today the USA is coming to terms with the enormity of the destruction inflicted on its States by Hurricane Katrina.

It is therefore highly significant that in a world where we talk about developed and developing, the indiscriminating forces of nature render us all equal and point to our common fragility and humanity.

These recent events have thereby highlighted our interdependence, reinforced the need for sustained and effective international cooperation and have placed before us, forcibly, the need to carry out a programme for global development to stop poor people from being poor, no matter where they live.

They highlight also the unnecessary and unsavoury dilemma which we have imposed on ourselves.

For, with today's technology, financial resources and accumulated knowledge, mankind has the capacity to overcome extreme deprivation. Yet, the international community allows poverty to destroy lives on a scale that pales into insignificance the impact of all of the world's natural disasters.

It is unconscionable that we should have to continue to live in a world that consists of a permanent coalition of unequals – the fabulously rich and the desperately poor.

It is especially unacceptable that the principal agents of international cooperation - trade and aid - should be used as instruments to perpetuate underdevelopment.

The world can do better.

The issues at the core of global development have nothing to do with means; they have to do with morality.

We feel that this occasion should be one not just for recommitment to the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration, as narrowly defined, but for a new commitment to a process of compassionate global development that draws upon the best values known to man.

Five years ago, Barbados wholeheartedly adopted the Millennium Development Goals that gave quantifiable expression to the substance of the Millennium Declaration.

We accepted these goals not as new international tests to be passed, but as an inspiration for us to reach for higher social and economic heights.

We therefore propose not just to meet the goals, but to exceed them.

To this end, we have woven them into our National Strategic Plan for the next 20 years.

We entertain no illusion about the difficulty we will experience in meeting these goals.

Though small, our nation has attained a human development index that puts us ahead of countries in the European Union. The price we have had to pay is to have access to aid and development finance denied to us at an early stage in our development.

We are therefore largely on our own as the financier of our development programmes.

At the same time, we can no longer plan our national development on the expectations of enjoying preferential access to the markets of the world.

This double-edged challenge posed by the reduction in our access to concessional financial resources and the demands of trade liberalisation has drastically transformed the environment within which our national development takes place.

It however does not deter us from believing that we can attain full development; rather it causes us to look to new means and devices by which that can be attained.

Similarly, we believe that the state of the global society requires us to look to new means by which global economic and social progress can be attained.

In this regard, permit me to suggest that the MDGs will only be achieved if the eighth Millennium goal of a global partnership for development is fully addressed. Barbados believes that it is vitally important for this High Level Plenary Meeting to be used by Heads of State and Government to reaffirm commitment to the global

partnership for development in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. This calls for increased and more predictable resources; a comprehensive, sustainable and development-oriented solution to the debt problem; the promotion of a universal, open and fair multilateral trading system, and a global governance system that, not only allows for the full and effective participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making, but which also manages the world economies in a manner that would distribute more equitably the world's resources.

Anything less will find us all "wanting" by 2015.

Mr. President, the Barbadian economy is now largely a coastal economy. Barbados like many other SIDS face a high degree of vulnerability occasioned by climate change, climate variability and other associated phenomena such as the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

The Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action clearly identifies the key areas that

need to be addressed to help SIDS respond to these and other sustainable development challenges.

The Compassionate Development of which I spoke earlier requires that our development partners assist SIDS in getting easier and more effective access to the financial resources, appropriate technologies needed as well as assistance in developing human and institutional capacity.

Mr. President, my focus on the development cluster should not detract from the other important reform issues that the High Level Meeting is addressing. Barbados believes that in any discussion of reform, it is critical that the roles of the principal organs such as the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should be re-enforced consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President, the Government and people of Barbados have a vision to transform Barbados into a fully developed country; a model democracy that is prosperous, productive, peaceful, socially just and inclusive; a centre for high quality services whose standards of excellence are global and at the same time rooted in

the best of our traditions. We have made substantial progress in each of these spheres. Throughout this endeavour we will count on the solidarity of like-minded alliances, and have hope in the shared responsibility of multilateralism of which this Organisation, the United Nations, must be the core.

I thank you.