



# SAINT LUCIA

ADDRESS BY  
SENATOR THE HON. PETRUS COMPTON  
MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CIVIL AVIATION  
OF SAINT LUCIA  
TO THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2005

(check against delivery)

Co-Chairs of this Summit,  
Excellencies,

Five years ago the Heads of State and Government of our United Nations convened in this very chamber to reaffirm their faith in this organisation and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Concerned as they were about the de-humanizing conditions which constituted the reality of over one billion of the world's citizens, they resolved to create at the national and global levels, an environment conducive to development and the elimination of poverty. In support of this overall objective, they took great care to identify a set of priority goals and targets, the Millennium Development Goals, which they pledged to meet by the year 2015.

Five years ago we ushered in a new millennium and translated the optimism, goodwill, and promise which it bore into a declaration of faith in this organisation and in each other; ours was a statement of hope for the future of mankind.

So how have we fared since then, Co-Chairs? How much of the promise have we, and in particular, the over one billion of the world's dispossessed been able to realise?

Much has happened since then however, to inflict the deepest wounds on our psyche, to change the world, and to distract us from the task which we set ourselves. From the deadly terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and others since then, to the total devastation of Grenada by Hurricane Ivan, to the terrible destruction and loss of life brought on by the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004, to the most recent devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in the southern United States, countries large and small, weak and strong, have had to address various and new kinds of vulnerability, so that valuable energy and physical resources have had to be diverted away from activities geared toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

This is not to deny that there has been progress in the achievement of some of the Millennium Development Goals in some countries. Indeed there has been some success, but too much is yet to be achieved. Saint Lucia remains concerned that the development partnership to which developed and developing countries committed themselves is far from being realized. We are heartened however by the initiatives being spearheaded by the G8 in respect of Africa, and look forward to an early translation of the commitments made by both the G8 and African Governments, into tangible benefits for the long suffering people of that continent.

Co-Chairs, five years ago at the Millennium Summit, Saint Lucia pointed to certain concerns which were contributing to a growing despair and cynicism about the future of Small Island Developing States, and the role of bodies like the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation in the shaping of that future. We say today with great sadness that the reasons for our concerns still persist.

We remain concerned that the global community of nations can at different times, depending on the rubric under which it convenes, promote philosophies or actions that are sharply contradictory.

We remain concerned that within this chamber, the nations of the world can promote with so much enthusiasm, their determination to work toward achieving a world free of hunger, poverty and disease, at the same time that the strong and powerful are adopting positions in other chambers which have the effect of increasing the marginalisation, and destroying the limited opportunities for survival, of the small, the disadvantaged, and the weak,

We remain *concerned* that even today, fellow member countries of our United Nations find it necessary to engage in activities at the World Trade Organisation that are designed to deny the very weakest among us the opportunity for production and trade of our most important export commodities, undermining all efforts at achievement of the very Millennium Development Goals which we seek to promote.

Co-Chairs, in the face of such insensitivity, how can small and vulnerable banana producing countries like Saint Lucia and Dominica, or small sugar producing states like Saint IGtts and Nevis (which has been forced as of this year to discontinue the production of sugar), be expected to hold faith, confidence or hope in the declarations that are customarily issued at the end of our Summits?

Our economies may be small and vulnerable, but our citizens are real people who have the same aspirations as others everywhere, for prosperity, security and peace. They too have a right to freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to live in dignity. These aspirations hold validity not only in this chamber, but in every other, wherever our nations may gather.

Co-Chairs, Saint Lucia is concerned that the development promise of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations is yet to be delivered. Time is running out, and a concerted effort must be made to secure a speedy realisation of that promise. Saint Lucia believes that overseas development assistance must continue to play an important role in the development of our economies, and in this regard we urge our developed country partners to deliver on their promise of increased levels of such assistance that was made at the Monterrey Summit in March 2002. We remain convinced however, that there is greater dignity in the facilitation, promotion, and realisation of our capacity for trade. Our insistence on the right to engage in cross-border trade on terms that are fair, is but one

manifestation of our commitment to take primary responsibility for our own development.

Co-Chairs, we have it in our power to create a world free from hunger, poverty and disease. We have it in our power to create a world where all its citizens can live in larger freedom. The technology and the material wealth exist to allow us to do so today, more than at any other time in the history of mankind. But be assured Co-chairs that the hungry, the poor, the sick, the wretched billions of this earth are not comforted by our declarations and resolutions. The truth is, Co-Chairs, we do not need new declarations. What we really need is the political will to do what we have already resolved to do, and more! Let us rise to the real challenge and mobilise that will. This is the task before us.

Co-Chairs, I thank you.