



REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

STATEMENT

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H.E. MR. JAMES A. MICHEL

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

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THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING

OF THE 60TH SESSION OF THE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

15 SEPTEMBER 2005

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Mr. President,

My delegation congratulates you for your appointment and expresses its felicitations to your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, for having so well prepared the ground for this historic World Summit.

Our congratulations also go to the Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to his team, for the remarkable preparation and organization of the Summit, without which such a major event would have been restricted in its ambitions and impact.

Mr. President,

We gather in the United States two weeks after the hurricane Katrina has caused so much loss of life and material damage. Let me express once again my deep condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the government and people of the United States of America as well as to all those who have been affected by this catastrophe.

Late last year in the Indian Ocean — with the tsunami — and now in America, we are reminded that natural disasters know no borders.

These tragedies, wherever they hit, stress the importance of collective responses and in the case of countries with limited relief and emergency resources, they underscore the need for coordinating international efforts within the UN framework.

Of equal importance is the collective task of investing in preparedness and in reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, in order to strengthen national and regional capacities in the fields of risk assessment, hazard monitoring, warning system, information and knowledge sharing, and training.

Let us enhance the effectiveness of our collective efforts, before, during and after such tragic events.

Mr. President,

Most of us advocate a stronger and more effective United Nations, a practical and result-oriented United Nations, with less bureaucracy and a new ethics based on a human-centred strategic vision of what development is.

However pertinent our reservations and criticisms may be with regard to the present situation, the United Nations has an indisputable record of achievements over its 60 years of existence.

This fact should not be overshadowed and I would like to pay a tribute to the UN for its success in promoting acceptable norms and standards governing international relations and confronting problems affecting humankind.

In a changing, challenging and often unpredictable world, where the task of protecting one's respective national interests is becoming incredibly complex, the UN Charter continues to give us this particular sense of common direction we need to adjust our priorities and keep thinking globally.

Mr. President,

Development is indeed a multi-faceted process leading towards real growth, access to skills, technologies, markets, finance and other related areas.

We welcome and commend the important decisions and commitments of Gleneagles G8 Summit in those areas, in particular to increase resources for development assistance and the fight against pandemic diseases as well as debt cancellation.

At the International Meeting in Mauritius of January this year, leaders of Small Island Developing States mapped out a joint action on a range of long-term challenges from global warming to international trade and sustainable development. A coordinated relationship between economic development and sustainable development was emphasised. Sustainable development is not just an environmental issue but goes to the heart of all forms of development and must be considered within the whole planning process including a financial and development framework.

In this context, efforts of countries having reached a middle income status should be recognised and acknowledged. It is imperative that these countries be firmly supported to help them manage the next phase of their development

The drop or lack of interest of the developed world towards such countries is by nature unfair, especially when these countries have been left with no other choice but to borrow heavily to preserve the assets of their social development.

Moreover, the middle-income status of many small island developing states camouflages the extent of their vulnerability. I wish to voice my strong concern about the loss of trade preferences for some of our countries and the adverse impact this would have on our export capabilities. We therefore call on developed countries to seriously take this issue in consideration at the forthcoming meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Hong-Kong.

For this reason, Small Economies – in particular Small Islands Developing States – turn to the UN requesting that it acts as a fully-pledged decision-maker in economic affairs, contributing to a new world order in which more consideration is given to the specificities and vulnerabilities of SIDS.

Mr. President,

Safety and security, are also pre-requisites to any strategy or action plan focusing on sustainable development.

Seychelles strongly supports the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism. We all realize the importance of developing domestic counter-terrorism capabilities, and we call for more assistance and co-operation in this field.

With this concern in mind, and also from a more general standpoint, we do hope that in a near future our sub-regional cooperation grouping, the Indian Ocean Commission, will obtain observer status vis-a-vis the UN.

Mr. President,

Seychelles agrees that the resolution on a strengthened and revitalized General Assembly is timely and we also agree that its central role as the chief deliberative policy-making and representative organ of the UN needs to be re-asserted.

At the same time, we are of the view that the reform of the UN, however fundamental a matter, should not distract our mind from the other pressing issues which are on our agenda, especially the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as part of the fight against global poverty, and for the attainment of dignity and happiness by men and women in all the countries of our world.

Mr. President,

Let me re-assure you that Seychelles strongly supports the Declaration of the Summit and strongly recommends its prompt implementation.

We also wish to reaffirm our belief that the United Nations is an irreplaceable body, essential for the conduct of international affairs in the only spirit that should guide such affairs – that of fairness, mutual respect and solidarity. It is in that spirit that we must work together to make our world safer and more prosperous.

Thank you.