



The
Bahamas

**STATEMENT
BY**

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OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

**AT THE
HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING
OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Co-Presidents, Mr Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured to address this august body, particularly as we, perhaps the most propitious gathering of the international community, come together on the 60th anniversary of the United Nations to review the progress we have made in addressing the daunting challenges that face us all as inhabitants of this planet. We are here to tackle the increasingly complex questions of development, security and human rights, and to make the decisions necessary to move forward.

On behalf of the delegation of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas I extend warm congratulations to you and your co-President on your election.

We are here today to renew our commitment to a global partnership envisioned in the outcomes of the major UN summits and conferences over the past fifteen years, a partnership to advance a comprehensive development agenda based on mutual responsibility and accountability. The Bahamas is encouraged by this emphasis on development and development cooperation, as we are of the view that the full implementation of the outcomes of the major UN summits and conferences should be the priority of the international community.

Most importantly, The Bahamas recognises that in order to achieve the global development goals as set out in the outcomes of the major UN summits and conferences, a substantial increase in resources is required. In this connection, we reaffirm the long-standing commitment of 0.7 per cent target of Gross National Income (GNI) for Official Development Assistance (ODA) and welcome the commitments made, especially by the EU and others, to this end. We urge those that have not yet done so, to take positive steps in this regard, in order that we are able to achieve the global development goals within the agreed timeframes.

Co-Presidents,

As a small island developing State, which has consistently taken primary responsibility for its own development, The Bahamas is encouraged in particular by the recognition of the international community of the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS. The special needs of SIDS run the gamut of development issues, and include the need for special and differential treatment in international trade, capacity development, and the transfer of technologies and corresponding know-how. In this connection, we welcome greater international cooperation for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, through inter alia the mobilisation of financial resources on a more predictable basis. The Bahamas also welcomes the renewal of the commitment by the International Community to achieve the broader goals of sustainable development through the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. We, however, wish to highlight the serious issue of climate change and the need to undertake global action to address its attendant dangers.

Co-Presidents,

The issue of reform of global economic governance to strengthen the voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision making and norm setting is also of critical importance to The Bahamas. It is for this reason that we value the Monterrey Consensus and the mandate to address systemic issues such as these. The Bahamas would also welcome any initiative to find pragmatic and innovative ways to ensure the effective, permanent representation of developing countries, particularly small developing countries, in international economic, trade and financial institutions, including the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Co-Presidents,

HIV/AIDS continues to threaten to undermine decades of progress in healthcare in developing healthy populations that facilitate economic growth throughout the world. It will take all of the political will and financial power of the world's nations to ensure that this deadly scourge is brought under control and then eliminated. We therefore welcome the strong commitment at this high-level meeting to fully implement the measures contained in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, as well as commitments regarding the provision of resources for prevention, treatment, care and support and access to reproductive health. We must put ourselves back on track to achieve our goal of reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015; these commitments are a right step in that direction.

Co-Presidents,

A key theme running throughout our deliberations leading up to this summit has been the interrelation of development, peace and security, as we have all acknowledged that there can be no meaningful social or economic development without security. In this context, The Bahamas strongly welcomes the historic recognition by all Heads of State and Government, for the first time, of the concerns of Small Island developing and coastal states regarding the risks inherent in the transport of radioactive materials by sea. The Bahamas, along with its CARICOM partners, has consistently expressed its grave concerns regarding the threat posed to the security and environmental and economic sustainability of the small island developing states of the region by the transshipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea. It is a peril that cannot be overstated, as it threatens our very survival and way of life. Accordingly, we continue to call on States involved in transshipments to desist from this practice.

Co-Presidents,

None of the proposals could be implemented if we do not face the fact that our Organisation is in dire need of reform. However, reform cannot be undertaken just for its own sake, or to meet the requirements of just a few. Nor can it be undertaken under threat or siege. Any efforts made in this area must be to the advantage of both the Member States and the Secretariat. We believe that the various proposals put forward by the Group of 77 and China satisfactorily address the needs of Member States and the Secretariat, and we re-iterate our support for the Group in this regard.

In addition to management reform, we support all efforts to reinvigorate the United Nations system so as to better serve our needs, including through the comprehensive reform of the Security Council. The Bahamas supports efforts to reform the United Nations human rights machinery to bring greater credibility and efficacy to this pivotal area of the UN's work, and we have been following the proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission with keen and positive interest. We hope that the Assembly would be able to complete negotiations in order to bring these two new bodies into being before the end of this sixtieth session. Likewise we encourage this Assembly to bring the negotiations for a draft comprehensive convention on terrorism to a conclusion during this session as well. In this regard, The Bahamas recalls and fully supports the recommendation of the High Level Panel to improve the cooperative nature of the UN counter-terrorism machinery, to promote greater dialogue, and provide greater assistance to states to meet counter-terrorism obligations.

Co-Presidents,

It is incumbent upon this Summit to move the process forward and take us one step closer toward meeting the needs, hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the world, whom we represent.

I thank you.