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Check against Delivery



Vanuatu

Statement by

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Your Excellencies Messrs Co-Presidents
Excellencies
Secretary General
Ladies and Gentlemen

Almost two weeks ago Hurricane Katrina caused widespread destruction putting it on record as one of the worst natural disasters in the history of the United States of America. I take time here to convey the condolences and deepest sympathy of my Government and people to the Government of the United States of America, and in particular to the families who lost loved ones. Our solidarity is with you throughout this difficult period of rebuilding homes and the devastated areas.

Hurricane Katrina is again a stark reminder of the increasing vulnerability of today's global environment where nature respects no boundaries. The severe impact of natural disasters will constantly remind us of the harsh experiences and critical development challenges confronting many of the island countries.

It is therefore our fervent hope that the international community will be able to do more in giving credible recognition to the natural characteristics and vulnerabilities of many of our countries. In this context I would like to associate Vanuatu with the statements from other island countries.

At the Millennium Summit we adopted a plan of action - the Millennium Development Goals – that aimed to eradicate poverty by half in 2015. This was followed by the Monterrey Conference which addressed the challenges of Financing for Development.

Vanuatu committed itself by institutionalizing the MDG's National Task Force to spearhead national implementation. Targeted goals have been established but the constraining factor for us, and I believe also for many of us in the developing world, is shortage of financial and technical resources. Recent reports on global implementation clearly indicate limited progress, a fact that must be attributed to the lack of genuine financial support from the international donor community. We urge development partners to increase flows of development assistance to the developing world.

I have been encouraged by the United States commitment to the MDGs as stated by President Bush on Wednesday and believe this is the inspiration we need to progress the global development agenda. The establishment of the Millennium Challenge Account after Monterrey is a welcome development and provides the impetus for countries to improve on governance issues as the prerequisite to improving and sustaining economic growth.

Vanuatu also strongly welcomes the commitments by Qatar, the People's Republic of China and the European Union to assist developing countries attain those goals. We are also encouraged by the innovation by France and a few others on the new initiatives to create additional sources of raising funds for the MDGs. We also applaud countries that have taken steps to reach the 0.7 % UN target for ODA. More though remains to be done by other members of the international donor community.

A snapshot of the global map clearly reveals disturbing evidence and deterioration in human security. Political and civil strife, disease, poverty and other human tragedies have taken bondage of many of our societies. Additionally, the emergence of other new ravages will present very serious threats to national cohesion and unless these are dealt with immediately the impact on the global level will present most difficult challenges for us.

The prosperity of many of our nations is only a deception to the harsh realities in most of our countries. History has seen more rhetoric and we must be able to transform this into genuine political will to enable quantifiable action that produces tangible results. Bold decisions must be taken. Our peoples want change - changes that will provide them with improved living standards, changes that will bring them hope, changes that will enable them to lead responsible lives in our communities and societies, and changes that create a freer, fairer and safer place to live.

The United Nations must continue to have the central role in managing this process and maintaining international peace and security. But if we are to be in resolute defence of the Organization's principles and mandate then reforms are essential in making it more representative and effective.

Now, fundamental in achieving this begins with tolerance and mutual respect. Our attitudes must change. There must be fairness and equal justice for all. Equally important, there must exist fair opportunities for all to participate in the work and decision-making of the United Nations.

When we talk about justice and human rights this must not be based entirely on Western concepts but should take into equal consideration our diversity. It is the harmony of these differences that presents challenges and if we are to succeed this is the assurance that is required to allow all nations to be treated with dignity and as equal partners.

Furthermore, democratic principles vigorously pursued by some must be cultivated carefully. Ultimately, the approaches of the big players must be able to advocate friendships- embrace and bring into favour nations that have been alienated, and who have felt threatened by oppressive policies. Intimidation is not the solution. Stronger nations must show transparent and genuine leadership to

engender majority support for our universal goals for the common good of all humanity.

As it embarks on its structural reforms the United Nations must also be able to once and for all address the contentious issues that have over the years undermined the credibility of the Organization. We must jointly work together in good faith to remove any doubts about past unjust decisions that have over many decades affected the lives of millions of innocent people. There can not be any contradiction in decisions if the United Nations is our guarantee for peace, security and justice.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Vanuatu remains firmly opposed to the development and production of weapons of mass destruction and consequently my Government has this year ratified the Ottawa and Chemical Weapons Conventions, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and also including the Stockholm Convention. The legal instruments are being deposited with the United Nations this week.

Public opinion will always focus on our failures; we have each committed ourselves to enhancing the universal role of the United Nations, and projecting a positive image about the Organization remains one of our biggest challenges. We cannot fail this time.

May we seek the Almighty Creator's wisdom in guiding us into the future.

I thank you.