



**STATEMENT
BY**

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MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GRENADA**

**AT
THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SEVENTY-SECOND
REGULAR SESSION
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**23 SEPTEMBER 2017
NEW YORK**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

PERMANENT MISSION OF GRENADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Mr. President,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I bring warmest greetings from Grenada's Prime Minister, Dr. The Rt. Honourable Keith C. Mitchell.

Mr. President, Prime Minister Mitchell believes in the work of the General Assembly and is only absent because he believes that as Chair of CARICOM his presence in the region allows his colleague prime ministers to travel to New York to plead the cases of their hurricane-stricken countries.

Our hearts and prayers go out to all the victims in our Caribbean region, Mexico and across the world, who are presently suffering adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters. Within the last few weeks, our fellow OECS and Caribbean Small Island Developing States of Barbuda and the Commonwealth of Dominica were ravaged by hurricanes Irma and Maria causing near total destruction and the loss of many lives. Our hearts also go out to the people of Cuba, with whom our region shares a special bond of friendship.

Mr. President, permit me to implore the international community to recognize, without delay, our responsibility to assist all those affected by natural disasters.

Mr. President, I join those before me in congratulating you on your election as president of this august international body. I am confident in your stewardship and assure you of my delegation's cooperation and support.

Mr. President, I also take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji, for his able stewardship of the 71st General Assembly.

I also wish to thank both you and Secretary-General Guterres for your leadership and willingness to serve as guardians of the spirit of our UN Charter. Mr. President, I believe there is value in repeating your astute and entirely relevant observation that the UN Charter makes only 5 references to "war", while "peace" was referenced 47 times.

Mr. President, over the next few minutes, I will offer Grenada's interpretation of what it means to "Strive for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet".

Mr. President, allow me to say a few words on Climate Change. Certainly, based on recent activities in the Atlantic, we just **cannot** dispute that the climate is changing. In fact, 97 percent or more of actively publishing climate scientists agree that climate-warming trends over the past century are extremely likely due to human activities.

For those that question the veracity of this science, the cluster of ‘extreme’ weather events over the last few weeks ought to suffice in sounding the alarm.

Mr. President, extreme weather events disproportionately affect our planet’s most vulnerable. Grenada therefore advocates for special attention to be paid to our women, children, elderly and disabled.

As we assess the physical damage caused by these disasters, let us never overlook the psychological toll on survivors.

Mr. President, we reiterate Grenada’s commitment to the Paris Agreement. Speaking in his capacity as Chair of the World Bank’s Small States Forum in June of this year, Grenada’s Prime Minister lamented the withdrawal of key partners from this agreement. We do not know these partners to be unreasonable and, therefore, we encourage them to see their own self-interest within the framework of a successful Paris Agreement.

Mr. President, the Government of Grenada has adopted an ambitious ‘Blue Growth’ agenda to take advantage of our vast maritime territory and its countless resources. Grenada aims to be the beacon of sustainable development for maritime states around the world. **Our relatively small size makes this an interesting and achievable project.** Our blue growth

master plan offers many opportunities for collaboration.

Mr. President, the Caribbean Community, CARICOM, has emphasized the need to advance measures to develop sustainable ocean-based economies in the Caribbean. The word 'Caribbean' reminds us to beautiful beaches like the world famous Grand Anse beach in Grenada. Our recent endeavours aim to use our maritime waters in a sustainable manner governed by robust policies in our people's interest.

Mr. President, I previously alluded to the many variables that influence the sustainability of our planet. Small states like Grenada and other CARICOM countries have to battle with threats to our access to financial markets. In March of this year, the IMF published a report titled "Recent trends in correspondent banking relationships" (CBRs) that highlights some of the challenges facing financial institutions and governments of small states. Observing that the number of CBRs has decreased, the IMF anticipates a negative effect on global trade and economic activity. In the specific case of Grenada and the rest of CARICOM, the disruption of international payments and capital inflows, as well as the high cost of compliance with the OECD-driven international tax agenda, were all underscored at the Ninth General Meeting between the Caribbean Community and the UN System in July of this year.

Mr. President, added to the threat of lost correspondent banking relationships, we also have to deal with the unilateral and often unfounded blacklisting of our institutions as money launderers and our countries as tax havens.

Mr. President, Grenada has worked tirelessly to sign tax information exchange agreements (TIEAs) and has signed 14 countries such agreements since 2010; the agreement with Canada in July of this year being the most recent.

Within CARICOM, Grenada's proactive approach and sense of international duty is not the exception.

It pains us as policy-makers when we expend our limited resources to comply with rules only to face arbitrary punishments when we are quite evidently doing our best. There are no easy answers to these challenges, but I urge our partners to desist from draconian approaches to these matters when dealing with vulnerable developing nations. Let us please favor reasonable and respectful dialogue before we de-risk and blacklist.

In a similar vein, Grenada supports General Assembly Resolution 70/5, which calls for an end to the economic, commercial, and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. We also believe that renewed dialogue may augur well for the discovery of a mutually acceptable way forward for both parties.

Lastly, on finance, Mr. President, I am proud to report that Grenada's structural adjustment programme has been widely successful. In May of this year, the IMF reported that, and I quote:

"Grenada has continued with steadfast implementation of reforms and made progress toward achieving the key program goals."

Through the leadership and wisdom of our Prime Minister and the sacrifices that the Grenadian people have made, Grenada's economy and institutions are today on solid footing. Mr. President, Grenada's thriving economy today is proof that the words 'structural adjustment' are not inherently bad. Investment, both foreign and local, is at the highest levels in recent years. We are cautious to declare victory, Mr. President. However, we are confident, that we are headed in the right direction.

Mr. President, Human Rights should never be politicized. I believe that all 7 billion of our planet's **Humans** possess certain **inalienable Human Rights**. Mr. President, the UN Declaration on Human Rights (1948) is unambiguous. And so, if we allow ourselves to be guided by Article 1 of the Declaration, issues of racism and other forms of discrimination will have **NO** place in our societies.

Our recent constitutional referendum offered a renewed view of the rights and freedoms of the Grenadian people.

Grenada thanks the United Nations for coordinating the provision of essential technical support throughout the exploration of constitutional reform.

Mr. President, Grenada continues to work with our international partners in the interest of international security. Mr. President, Grenada is active and compliant on numerous matters of international security. Grenada views the situation on the Korean peninsula with great trepidation and our position on these matters is clear and to that effect, the Cabinet of Ministers has recently approved the signing of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The proliferation of nuclear weapons is inherently destructive and serves **NO** useful purpose for humanity. The mere existence of these weapons is unacceptable. Let us never forget the suffering of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Mr. President, Grenada, therefore, urges its friends and allies to desist from all development and testing of these weapons.

Mr. President, 105 BILLION US Dollars spent each year on nuclear weapons. That amounts to \$12 million dollars an hour. If we are willing to make the shift from destruction to sustainable construction, the people of Barbuda, Dominica Cuba and all SIDS will be forever grateful.

Mr. President, Grenada remains preoccupied by recent political and social developments in Venezuela. In his capacity as Chair of CARICOM,

Grenada's Prime Minister has offered CARICOM's help in mediating discussions between the Government and the Opposition. Necessarily, Grenada's approach must be impartial. Grenada will not attempt to dictate terms to either side. What we seek is to encourage meaningful dialogue on the premise that the Venezuelan people can come together to safeguard the future of all the Venezuelan people. In the meantime, Grenada believes in the art of diplomacy and the principle of respect for State sovereignty and the right of all people to self-determination. The onus is squarely on the Government and the opposition to ensure that Venezuelans do not lose hope.

Mr. President, during a lecture series on reparatory justice Sir. Hilary Beckles, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, relayed the story of his upbringing on a sugar plantation at the University of Oxford. He recounted consuming handfuls of sugar in lieu of proper sustenance, and the scientifically proven impact that such practices have had on the former slaves that now inhabit Caribbean countries.

Mr. President, assigning culpability for the prevalence of diabetes, hypertension, and childhood obesity is a matter for another forum. That said, Grenada struggles with high rates of non-communicable diseases that put immense pressure on our limited fiscal space.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the signing of the landmark

CARICOM Heads of Government Port-of-Spain Declaration on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and while some progress has been made in reducing NCDs, Dr. Alafia Samuels, Director of the George Alleyne Chronic Disease Research Centre, University of the West Indies states the following as it relates to CARICOM and NCDs, and I quote:

“Our soda consumption is the highest in the world. In some countries more than 30% of young people are overweight or obese. Our diabetes rates are double global rates and in some populations up to 50% of us are living with high blood pressure. It is clear that we need to accelerate our response.”

Mr. President, I am sure you would appreciate that the statistics just presented are not flattering to your call for a “decent life for all”. The Caribbean region has the highest burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the Americas. We therefore urge key allies to continue to partner with us as we attempt to correct this unfortunate reality.

Mr. President, Grenada has made important progress in controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS. Only 0.3% of our population presently lives with this disease. The work of Grenada’s National Infectious Disease Control Unit (NIDCU) and our health care practitioners and policy-makers must be highly commended for their work in this regard. That work, however, is greatly supported by international assistance that is being depleted without foreseeable replenishment as it already has in some Caribbean countries.

Grenada thanks the Global Fund, the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), PAHO and the German Development Bank (KfW) for their assistance. I urge donors to be flexible in their relief responses. We cannot wait on data while our people suffer. Mr. President the data will come eventually but in the meantime lives, families, communities are at stake.

Mr. President, Grenada's commitment to ending corruption is clear and long-standing. In 2015 Grenada acceded to the UN Convention against Corruption. Thirteen years prior, in 2002, Grenada ratified the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. We have since created the Office of the Integrity Commission, an independent body, to end the scourge of corruption.

Mr. President, I close with the assurance that Grenada believes in the UN System. I have had the honour of representing the people of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique on several occasions at this noble institution. As I retire from active political life, I am optimistic that the window is still open for us to leave a peaceful, inhabitable, and prosperous planet for future generations.

The challenges of our time are dynamic and continuous and **we would be remiss to put anything but our planet first.**

I thank you!