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Grenada's Statement 73rd Session UNGA

THEME

**Making the UN relevant to all People: Global Leadership and
Shared Responsibilities for Peaceful, Equitable and Sustainable
Societies**

Salutations

Madam President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Heads of Government & Delegations,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to extend the usual warm greetings from the Government and people of Grenada, on whose behalf I am privileged to address this noble institution and its distinguished members.

Madam President, I join those before me in congratulating you on your

election as president of this 73rd General Assembly. I am confident in your stewardship and assure you of my delegation's cooperation and support.

I am also pleased to join esteemed colleagues before me in thanking the outgoing President of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Miroslav Lajcak for his able and focused leadership.

Indeed, I must also congratulate and thank Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, for his leadership of the United Nations; and to express our deep gratitude especially, for the keen interest shown in the developmental challenges facing Small Island Developing States.

Madam President, the Government and people of Grenada join others around the world in mourning the passing of former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

Mr. Annan, who served the United Nations with distinction, was the consummate diplomat and international statesman, who resolutely defended the ideals of international peace and security.

The former UN Secretary-General was a humanitarian who worked tirelessly to ensure that disadvantaged persons around the world were afforded their human rights.

Madam President, Mr. Annan's wise and courageous leadership helped place the issue of sustainable development on the international agenda, through the Millennium Development Goals. The MDGs have since evolved into the Sustainable Development Goals, another globally agreed upon framework designed to push the international development agenda. Madam President, we are acutely aware of how critical development issues are for Small Island Developing States like Grenada and we are indebted to Kofi for initiating and spearheading this historic global movement.

Today, as we mourn his loss, we are comforted by the fact that his legacy will continue to inspire generations of leaders around the world.

Madam President, there's one particular quote from Brother Kofi that resonates deeply and is very relevant to this year's UNGA theme:

"To live is to choose. But to choose well, you must know who you are and what you stand for, where you want to go and why you want to get there."

Madam President, as member States of this noble Body, we must deliberately choose to make the United Nations relevant to all peoples.

We must also choose a deliberate path to Global Leadership that promotes shared responsibility for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies.

Madam President, Grenada also joins with the rest of the UN community in honoring the late South African hero and international statesman, Nelson Mandela, on this the centenary of his birth.

This tribute comes at a time when the international community is looking to leaders who understand the necessity of fostering international solidarity and cooperation; leaders who bring people together and who sacrifice for the greater good. The global community has no better example of this than the late great, Madiba. It is our hope that leaders everywhere will work diligently to uphold his staunch legacy of promoting peace, equality and human dignity.

Madam President, our assembly is occurring in a global context characterized by changing political, ideological and religion-based tensions, social revolution, and an increasing anxiety about economic, social and political inequality and marginalization.

These global changes are magnified, especially for developing States, in the face of challenging phenomena such as climate change, natural

disasters, and non-communicable diseases. With limited access to development financing, these challenges are further exacerbated.

Pursuing policies and strategies for confronting these challenges with the corresponding extraordinary solutions must be the most imperative means towards securing more sustainable societies.

Climate-Smart Sustainability

Madam President, we are well into the 2018 Hurricane Season; yet, the Caribbean is still recovering from one of the most devastating hurricane seasons in 2017. We held our breath as this year's various tropical systems—Beryl, Isaac, and only this week, Kirk—took aim at our region. Such weather systems are yet another reminder of the vulnerability of the region and the realities of climate change, capable of eviscerating whole industries in a matter of hours. This is especially evident in our region, which is heavily dependent on agriculture and tourism, and in which any damage to property or infrastructure is significant.

Yet, Madam President, there is hope.

Too often we talk about the disadvantages of small nations. The Global Climate Challenge offers us an opportunity to not only highlight our

vulnerability but to also focus on the distinct **advantages** of being small States.

The Caribbean and other SIDS can serve as test cases for nationwide implementation of climate-related technologies and advances. We also represent some of the most globally compelling business cases for sustainable renewable energy investment.

Being climate smart goes beyond policies. It goes beyond resilient housing, resilient infrastructure and resilient agriculture. It means that the region can also serve as a global beacon for renewable energy and energy efficiency. We aim to not only be resilient, but with our region's tremendous potential in hydro-electricity and geothermal energy, we could also be CLIMATE SMART.

In understanding the need to rethink our adaptation to climate change, the Government of Grenada has established a new over-arching Ministry, titled the Ministry of Climate Resilience, Environment, Fisheries, Forestry, Disaster Management and Information.

Its mandate is to work speedily to ensure that engrained in every aspect of our country's development is the question of addressing climate change and climate resilience.

Grenada is also currently shifting some of its macroeconomic focus to ensure attention is paid to the development of our green and blue economies; thus, marrying economic development with environmental sustainability.

The road to climate-smart sustainability is long and arduous, but it is not insurmountable, and we must ensure that we are strategic in this journey.

Health

Madam President, in building climate-smart and sustainable societies, we cannot discount the inherent need to improve the health of our citizens and the conditions for fostering good health.

Unfortunately, like many CARICOM states and other developing nations, Grenada struggles with the scourge of non-communicable diseases.

Madam President, to avoid repeating some of the alarming health statistics with which we are confronted and developmentally challenged, I only wish to emphasize that our Government calls for global leadership and looks forward to international solutions that would preserve the health of our people, promote longevity and sustain our future.

Indeed, the successful completion of this week's high-level meetings on non-communicable diseases and Tuberculosis is encouraging, particularly the commitments set forth in the Political Declarations, laudably adopted by consensus. Now is the time to scale up our efforts to ensure we honor those commitments.

Finance

Madam President, as we attempt to create sustainable societies, we are confronted with certain global financial policies and actions that pose significant threats to our region's sustainable development.

Correspondent banking and de-risking, blacklisting and middle-income status graduation are measures that negatively affect Caribbean economies.

Madam President, the unilateral, and premature graduation of many Small Island Developing States to Middle Income Status without consideration of our region's specific vulnerabilities has resulted in significant budgetary shortfalls, adversely affecting our economic and social development.

Madam President, our region has inherent structural economic challenges that already restrict the pace of our development. We ask that these

impediments to growth be considered when our matters arise for consideration.

Madam President, the Caribbean Development Bank has pioneered the use of vulnerability indices when setting the terms of its financing. Likewise, we urge international partners to work toward an acceptable ‘Country Vulnerability Index’ that holistically assesses our countries’ development and risks.

Moreover, the withdrawal of correspondent banking services to CARICOM Member States, can be seen as an economic assault that would destabilize the financial sector of our already vulnerable economies.

Remittances contribute in real and significant terms to the GDP of small states. In fact, the World Bank has stated that any sudden stop in remittances in economies that rely on these flows could pose a significant threat to socio-economic stability.

Added to the threat of lost correspondent banking relationships, we also have to contend with the unilateral and often unfounded blacklisting of our institutions as “money launderers” and our countries as “tax havens.”

It pains us as policy-makers when we expend our limited resources to comply with international 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.

International Security

Madam President, Grenada continues to work with our international partners to advance international peace and security.

Grenada's position on the development of nuclear weapons is clear. The development of nuclear weapons is inherently destructive, and, therefore, serves **NO** good purpose for humanity. Deterrence only makes sense where there is the possibility of deployment. The mere existence of these weapons anywhere, is unacceptable. Grenada, therefore, urges its friends to desist from the development and testing of these weapons. Imagine what we could achieve instead, if we put our brilliant scientists to work on Climate Change and building climate-smart resilient and sustainable societies.

Small Arms

Madam President, as we strive to maintain the Caribbean Region as a zone of peace, some of us continue to be affected by the trafficking of small

arms from the countries that manufacture and sell these arms freely. In some of our islands, states-of-emergency have been declared at various times, to control criminal activity, because of the increasing availability and use of small arms.

Madam President, small arms and gun violence undermine the rule of law and are often major factors behind the displacement of civilians and the violation of human rights.

Madam President, we cannot build sustainable societies if our public security is incessantly threatened by this scourge.

Madam President, the main purpose of United Nations is to maintain international peace and security and to prevent violence and war. Indeed, in the United Nations Charter there are only 5 references to “war”, while it refers to “peace” 47 times.

Madam President, this is extremely instructive to us, and, therefore, it is imperative that the global leadership take decisive action.

Indeed, as we strive to create sustainable societies, the people of Cuba continue to suffer under the unjust decades-old embargo imposed on them by the United States of America. Grenada continues to call for the

immediate lifting of the unfair economic, commercial, and financial embargo on the Republic of Cuba.

Madam President, as such, Grenada strongly supports General Assembly Resolution 70/5, which calls for an end to this dreadful embargo.

Madam President, some of our neighbors in Latin America are currently experiencing political and economic challenges, which threaten the peaceful existence, sustainable development, and by extension, the stability of the region.

Grenada calls for dialogue and asks that good sense and wisdom prevail in all attempts aimed at resolving these conflicts. In the same vein, we call for the political integrity and sovereignty of these states to be respected. The Government of Grenada continues to offer its hand in good faith to facilitate dialogue towards the settlement of said disputes.

Madam President, as I close, I implore that we be relentless in our pursuit of the purposes of this organization. Our quest must be for the pursuit of economic opportunities, as we strive to achieve Peaceful, Equitable and Sustainable Societies for all. These ideals will be out of our reach if we do not promote, encourage, and dare I say *insist* on resolute global

leadership in solving our developmental challenges that transcend boundaries.

I thank you.