



Permanent Mission of St. Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations

Statement

By

His Excellency Honorable Dr. Timothy Harris

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Education

of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis

at the 59th Regular Session

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Additionally, our capital project investments have improved the existing distribution networks to satisfy demand and to better extend service coverage for potable water throughout the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis. Our road improvement and maintenance programs have resurfaced miles of road and improved drainage throughout the twin island Federation. The improvement of the tourism product has generated several new jobs consistent with my Government's people-focused agenda; while allowing us to depend less on an agriculture-based economy, which continue to suffer from government subsidies offered to farmers in large countries, and which make it more difficult for small economies like mine to compete. Our capacity to compete is further undermined by the recent unilateral decision of the EU to reduce the price of raw sugar by more than 30 percent.

Despite these challenges Mr. President, we continue to press on mindful of the need to preserve the environment. St. Kitts and Nevis are two beautiful islands faced with the geographic reality of being located in the hurricane corridor. We witness the cost of beach and coastal erosion resulting from rising sea level and hurricanes. Integrating environmentally sustainable policies into our development agenda has been a challenge. However, our determination to protect and preserve the islands' patrimony by adopting environmentally friendly programs is imperative.

At this juncture Mr. President I need to emphasize the current situation facing Small Island Developing States. All SIDS lack the economy of scale to overcome their vulnerabilities on their own. We are extremely vulnerable unless we form geographical partnerships as CARICOM has done. This however does not exempt us from the vulnerabilities that we face every day. Geographical partnership does allow for a quick response in the event of adversity. The vulnerability is ever present, but can be managed if the parties involved recognize it. My delegation therefore urges the international community to accept the concept of vulnerability, leading to a vulnerability index that can be appropriately applied to Small Island Developing States. Grenada's devastation within 3 hours of Hurricane Ivan dramatizes for us how a generation of developmental progress can be wiped out in a small vulnerable nation. There is a pressing need for a global development fund to assist SIDS in recovery following national disasters.

As emphasized in the Millennium Development Goals, St. Kitts and Nevis welcomes the opportunity to build partnerships for development. However, partnerships can only be developed when there is a willingness on all sides to partner. St. Kitts and Nevis remains a willing partner. We are extremely pleased that our programs and development agenda coincide with the Millennium Development Goals. We are encouraged, Mr. President, that foreign investors have found in St. Kitts and Nevis, a Government and people ready to work with them in a climate conducive to their corporate expectations and our national development objectives.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. President, pragmatic and productive partnerships are the most effective vehicle available to the international community to tackle effectively the multitude of problems we face. We speak of important issues such as democracy, globalization, terrorism, poverty eradication, human development and the spread of infectious disease as if they are completely disconnected. The goal of human development, on any scale, is best achieved by recognizing the interconnectedness of our lives, economies and policies. This imposes an obligation to develop common strategies, partnerships and policy approaches that accept and address the intrinsic linkages among the problems facing nation states.

Mr. President, I propose that the Pan-Caribbean Partnership on HIV/AIDS is the first and only regional mechanism created to deal with the pandemic in a multinational way. Our regional cooperation has led to reductions in the cost of anti-retroviral from USD20.000 per person per year to USD200.00 per patient per year. We have also been successful in negotiating reduced prices for other important pharmaceutical drugs. This experience speaks to the value of partnership and cooperation. We believe that networks or collective mechanisms are the most effective means of problem solving. We praise the efforts of the Global Fund and the United Nations for their work in mobilizing additional resources to treat people living with HIV/AIDS and to fight the spread of the disease.

Notwithstanding, the recently concluded XV International AIDS Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand laid bare the serious challenges ahead in our battle against the spread of HIV/AIDS. It was also a stark reminder that policies and ideologies are still getting in the way of partnership and progress. I commend the Government of Thailand for hosting the conference, for its pledge to increase funding, for its success in tackling the spread of the disease, and for highlighting the theme of "Access for All".

The idea of fighting HIV/AIDS only through faith simplifies the human condition and suggests a misunderstanding of the nature and scope of the disease. My government insists that a pragmatic policy approach to fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS is as fundamental to good governance as is holding free and fair elections. Good governance means governments listening to and caring for their citizens. Good governance implies that leaders must lead with moral courage, take bold and, sometimes, controversial steps in the public interests.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Mr. President, good governance means placing the United Nations at the center of our international interaction, in accordance with and in full respect for the Charter. Good governance requires respect for every country's right to choose its own course consistent with its own laws and the will of its people. Good governance is not simply about whether we ostracize a country if its policies run counter to our national agenda. It should be about creating better understanding, cooperation, partnership, and building bridges of friendship. Good governance suggests to us in St. Kitts and Nevis that

interconnected world where national political decision in one corner of the world have devastating consequences thousands of miles away. We have already seen how acts of terrorism perpetrated against one state can have a worse effect economically on other states. We have experienced how diseases like HIV/AIDS, SARS, tuberculosis, malaria and others have become transnational and their emergence in one nation can spread and