

V A N U A T U



STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE

**59<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**



Globalization has brought with it both opportunities and challenges but for the small island states the challenges are much more ominous.

Mr. President,

Those are the realities.

These negative developments lead me to conclude to the indispensability of the United Nations and the need for all members to work as friends and equal partners. Globalization has brought nations together-we are interlinked and interdependent and this requires global cooperation and governance from all responsible members of the Organization . Understandably, there are vested interests from the powerful but this requires genuine cooperation and goodwill, and the convergence of those interests and the United Nation's role in that regard must remain fundamental to ensure compatibility with the international legal framework. Maverick policies and decisions will only create further division and hostility.

With that mindset, I believe there is now consensus for far reaching reforms to be introduced to make the United Nations relevant to all its members with the fundamental objective of preserving international peace, security, and stability.

My government fully supports efforts to reform the United Nations system to ensure a stronger  
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**Mr. President,**

While the fight against terrorism takes center stage, it must not overshadow the socio-economic development agenda and other serious security concerns affecting the developing world and in particular those of small island states. Resources will inevitably be diverted towards combating terrorism in all its facets but judicious decisions need to be taken. It is against this background that our delegation wishes to associate itself with statements made by other delegations on the imperativeness of supporting the development constraints of developing nations, and in particular the concerns of the small island states on vulnerability.

At the Millennium Summit Leaders adopted the 8 Millennium Development Goals with targets to be achieved by 2015. While commitments have been made the lethargic performance of many countries, including Vanuatu, demonstrate the need for more international support in assisting countries meet those targets.

The global economic situation today discriminates against many of the developing economies. Unfair trading practices and imposition of intrusive policies on national economies, in this case Vanuatu, affect the economy by opening it up to unfavorable conditions that only favour the stronger nations. Post-Cancun poses extreme challenges for the economic survival and socio-economic stability of many of the small developing nations like Vanuatu.

My Government's initial focus is on the social sector- in health and education. The Government's Prioritized Action Agenda launched last year in consultation with development partners is the catalyst for Vanuatu's medium to long term strategic planning. This development policy framework is consistent with achieving the MDG targets and emphasizes the need to empower our rural population through infrastructure and capacity building initiatives. Our appeal goes to our development partners to adequately assist us in its implementation.

On that note my delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the United States of America for granting Vanuatu eligibility to access development funding from the Millennium Challenge Account.

**Mr. President,**

The primary responsibility for development lies with the state itself however, external influences and conditional aid has not adequately corresponded to Vanuatu's development priorities and advancement. The pretext for foreign advice conditioned with development assistance has been to improve governance and are sectors considered vital in establishing a strong economy.

In Vanuatu's case this line of argument has not produced tangible results with restricted progress reflected in our continuous struggle with reforms that are more or less dictated by external forces. Both the recipient and the external assistance must be balanced and sensitive to national interests. Too often, these normal reactions are misunderstood by some of our development partners.

From Vanuatu's perspective, externally driven reforms must be buttressed by an equal partnership that respects local tradition, culture, and rights of all citizens without disturbing the essential uniting mechanisms of society that have successfully held us together over time. An exploitive agenda can only erode and dismantle these ingrained mechanics leaving us vulnerable to the rapid changes affecting all today.

Vanuatu embraces democracy and concepts of **governance/transparency** but these must be tailored to suit the traditional system without affecting the relevance and significance of those far-reaching principles.

Mr. President,

On a final matter, my delegation strongly reaffirms its support for Resolution 2758 of the Session of the General Assembly in 1971 recognizing the legal and political representation of the People's Republic of China as a member of the United Nations. Vanuatu again reiterates its unwavering support for One-China and urges all members of the United Nations to work in the interest of world peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I must bring to the attention of this Assembly another priority issue that is of grave importance to my Government and Nation. I raise again the matter concerning the relocation of the ESCAP Pacific Operations Center in Vanuatu to another location. My Government was not properly consulted and requests that the decision to relocate the EPOC from Vanuatu be reconsidered. If the UN ESCAP Pacific Operations Center's relevance in the region is questioned then my Government is proposing that a proper review be carried with a view to restructuring the ESCAP Office in order to relocate the Pacific Operations Center to Bangkok. Programmes and activities under ESCAP responsibility may be better coordinated through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the region.

I hope wisdom will prevail as the debate continues on our future destiny. Despite all our differences and diversities human security for all is our main goal, and this should remain the focus of the UN agenda. The cardinal question is will members allow the United Nations to undertake serious reforms in meeting the challenges ahead? The future remains in our hands.

Thank you for your attention.