



STATEMENT

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. STUART W. LESLIE
AMBASADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BELIZE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

TO THE

**FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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**PERMANENT MISSION OF BELIZE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Mr. President
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

My delegation congratulates you on the assumption of the Presidency. We have every confidence that the fifty ninth session of the General Assembly will enjoy success under your leadership.

We would also like to acknowledge the good work of your predecessor, Minister Julian Hunt of St. Lucia, whose efforts led to a new level of enthusiasm within the General Assembly.

As well we recognize the tireless efforts of our Secretary General.

Events of the past months impel us to ponder the importance of our Organisation in the never-ending struggle to secure a peaceful and dignified future for the world's people.

The United Nations was born to promote those values that would unite humanity – values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for peoples and for nature – and thus transcend the differences of the worlds' cultures. And so it is that nations large and small come to the United Nations to find, in the words of our Secretary-General, "common solutions to common problems." And so it is that we the Member States must ensure that the United Nations is effective for our ends.

In Belize we understand this and remain a legitimate partner in promoting principles such as peace, the ty OnvNation5mfeaf our Organisation in

Yes, challenges to development abound – challenges that make us inherently vulnerable - and we as small states call on the international community to take into account our vulnerability so as to ensure that policies and measures relating to development correspond to our special needs.

As a member of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS), my country underscores the importance of addressing the special needs of these states through the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The International Meeting, which will conduct full and comprehensive review of the Barbados Programme of Action to be held in Mauritius next January (2005) will provide an opportunity for the international community, especially the bilateral and multilateral donors, to renew their commitments to the Programme of Action. Of special importance to us all is the issue of climate change, and we must not flinch from taking effective measures to address this problem; those who seek to block effective solutions are creating conditions for insecurity that would dwarf the threats currently posed by terrorism.

In this context, we remind member States of the proposal first submitted to the General Assembly in 1999 to designate the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area within the context of sustainable development. The recent spate of hurricanes that have devastated our region, and which call for major efforts from the international community to mitigate our losses, reinforce our contention that our Caribbean Sea is as fragile as it is valuable to our social and economic well-being, indeed to our very survival. We call upon you to support us in our just efforts to achieve the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area during this General Assembly.

In addition to addressing the special needs of developing countries, development policies must above all be people centred. Coherent policies, sustainable partnerships, sustained support and ownership are critical factors to development.

This has never been as clear as in the case of Haiti. In the words of our Secretary-General: "the international community failed to develop sustainable partnerships with the Haitian society at all levels. The Haitian people were insufficiently involved in the development of policies that could move the country forward . . . Financial aid did not bear fruit to the extent expected because it was at times ill-targeted." With the lesson thus learnt, we have an opportunity to influence a positive wave of development for the people of Haiti.

In Haiti, we also have a clear example of the inextricable linkage between development and security. The threats and challenges to peace and security necessitate an integrated approach. My country hopes that the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change will embrace this approach in its findings and recommendations.

While we condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and have joined international efforts in the fight against terrorism, we are mindful that our actions for the preservation of peace and security must be consistent with international law and must be respectful of the human rights and freedoms of all peoples without discrimination, foremost among which must be the right to self-determination. It is for this reason that we shall remain strong proponents of the right of the Palestinian people to a secure and viable State. It is also for this reason that we support the Taiwanese people's right of representation before the United Nations.

But what United Nations? Last year our Minister of Foreign Affairs confined his remarks to an urgent call for the United Nations to recall and enforce the principles on which it was founded, basic among which is the principle of multilateralism, the most fundamental conviction that led to its creation: that States, on a basis of sovereign equality, conjointly take decisions that secure a peaceful and prosperous world for all. Tragically, events since then have only exacerbated the problem of powerful States taking the law into their own hands and acting in total disregard of the principles of the UN Charter and indeed of international law. If we do not act together to reverse this evil trend, we are walking – nay, running - on the road to perdition.

Yes, we support the call of India, Japan, Brazil and Germany for a permanent seat on the Security Council, if there must be permanent seats, and to this we would add the equally legitimate right of African and Arab nations to be so represented. But the reforms must go deeper. Why should any one country have a veto power? Why should millions of the wretched of the earth be left without an effective voice and powerless to change the world to a more just one?

And why do we, who so effectively acted to end apartheid in South Africa, tolerate the equally opprobrious apartheid practiced by the State of Israel against Palestinians in their own land, murdering and oppressing them without mercy and with impunity?

This year has been declared the International Year for the Commemoration of the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition; slavery was based on, and exacerbated, racism; let us honour that struggle by implementing the final declaration of the

World Conference against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in South Africa in 2001.

Likewise we continue to support UN efforts to bring greater visibility to the problems

both our peoples; we certainly support this approach and will do our part, as we have always done, to achieve these noble goals. But cooperation does not substitute for resolution of this age-old threat to the security and prosperity of our people.

We will therefore continue to work within the OAS to develop an agreed process that will bring finality to this matter, which will undoubtedly redound to the benefit of the peoples of both Belize and Guatemala and contribute to the peace and security of the region.

The challenges we face in the world today are not all unique to our generation; some are the result of our refusal to learn from the mistakes of the past, others are entirely of our making. Yet if we are to look at those values that unite us and be determined in our desire for good, we will find that working together brings us ever closer to a more just and peaceful world.

Thank you.