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Grenada and severely battered other island countries such as Haiti, the Bahamas, Cuba, the Cayman Islands, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica has shown how destructive the forces of nature can be to our development. The Government of Guyana extends its solidarity and support to all those afflicted, as well as to the United States of America, whose state of Florida has also been seriously struck. Such is the frequency of these phenomena that the international community must now seek to devise stronger and more responsive machinery to address their consequences. In this regard, Guyana attaches high importance to the outcome of the International Meeting to review the Barbados Programme on Small Island Developing States and the World Conference on Disaster Reduction which will be held in January next year respectively, in Mauritius and Kobe, Japan.

Mr. President, the scourge of terrorism has now reached a scale where it has been aptly described as a Third World War. Scarce resources must now be diverted from development to the war on terror. Yet the rampage of destruction continues unrestrained. The process underway to stem the illicit global trade in small arms and light weapons, and to forge more effective international instruments against terrorism and transnational crime commands Guyana's full support. We anxiously await the report of the United Nations High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in the hope that it will offer practical recommendations for preserving global peace and stability. The time may have come, we believe, to fully implement the collective security system that is envisaged in the UN Charter.

The age of globalization and liberalization in which we now live has undoubtedly brought with it laissez-faire attitudes and policies that have seriously affected societies everywhere. Lawlessness and violence are the new order of the day, threatening to destroy established systems of governance, especially in weak states. Witness the recent interruption of the democratic process in Haiti, the newest member of our Caribbean Community, which has exacerbated social conditions in that country. The Inter-American Democratic Charter and indeed our own CARICOM Charter of Civil Society expressly condemn such breaches of democracy. Notwithstanding our concern at this deviation Guyana stands ready to help the Haitian people overcome their social distress. The CARICOM Community of which both Guyana and Haiti are members, is currently coordinating our humanitarian assistance to the island.

Mr. President, respect for the fundamental tenets of the United Nations is essential if we are to avoid conflicts. The Charter is clear in its

proscription of the use of force except under the particular circumstances of Chapter VII. In this context, let me say that Guyana supports the reform of the Security Council, through an expansion in the membership of both the permanent and non-permanent categories and general improvement of its modus operandi. After careful deliberation, my Government has decided at this stage to support the aspirations of Brazil, India and an African State to permanent membership. We believe that their participation as developing countries in the work of the Council will make that body more balanced, representative and ultimately more accountable to the Assembly for the maintenance of global peace and security.

For Guyana, like for the rest of the international community, the situation in Iraq continues to be a source of pre-occupation. We would wish to see peace and stability quickly restored to that country and its people. Similarly, we urge an end to the suicidal conflict between Israel and Palestine and a return to negotiations leading to the creation of an independent Palestine and to the peaceful co-existence of the two states. As conflicts and humanitarian crises such as that in Darfur continue to multiply, the United Nations will be called upon to do more with less. We therefore call for the strengthening of regional arrangements, such as those of the Organisation of American States and the African Union acting in concert with the United Nations to assist in the search for durable solutions to conflicts and disputes.

Mr. President, it is also imperative that we strive with greater determination to secure our economic development and social progress. For more than six decades now, the international community has diligently sought answers to the development dilemma, moving from one facet to another, from disarmament to basic needs from economic growth to full employment from partnership to national ownership and from good governance to the free market. Thus far, the various models of development followed have failed to achieve their goals. In the continuing exploration, this year's Human Development Report has added the dimension of culture to the list of crucial elements. Cultural diversity, the report asserts, must be a central aspect of human development requiring us to go beyond social, political and economic opportunities to provide cultural freedom. As a small multi-ethnic state, Guyana fully accepts this proposition and is committed to preserving the culture that has brought our nation together and to harnessing it for our national development.

At the same time, we believe that, cultural diversity is our contemporary reality and must be respected by all. Too often strategies for peace and development ignore this reality with disastrous results. Not enough consultation and coordination are undertaken to ensure that programmes and projects are in keeping with nationally defined priorities and local circumstances. It is necessary, if failure is to be avoided, for there to be greater dialogue and cooperation the planning process for development. National leadership remains a *sine qua non* for successful development and must be strongly supported by development partners. In this spirit, Guyana renews its support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development and other such initiatives based on strong national leadership and international cooperation.

Mr. President, President Lula of Brazil and the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation are to be commended for calling attention at this Assembly to two major challenges facing the international community today viz. poverty and the inequities of globalization. Although we see daily on our television screens the emaciated faces of the hungry poor, we are yet to be stirred with the compassion and generosity of heart needed to relieve their misery. As globalization gains further ground, many more, especially in the small developing countries which are unable to take advantage of the process, will fall victim to marginalisation. My own country has recently been struck a devastating blow to its sugar industry, on which thousands of our people depend, as a result of trade liberalization and the reform of the European Union's sugar regime. Unless small states like ours are provided with special and differential treatment, they will be excluded from the global economy.

Next year the world's leaders will meet to review the progress made in achieving the Millennium Goals. All the indications are that there is hardly enough time to achieve our objectives. We can therefore ill afford to stand still; we must determine now what ought to be done to build and sustain momentum to meet the 2015 targets. Guyana's experience has been that these are not likely to be achieved without sustained economic growth. Although we have in place sound poverty reduction and national development strategies, we know that success depends in fair measure on a favourable international environment. We therefore urge that high priority be accorded to greater debt relief, the mobilization of development finance and the creation of equitable trading conditions to enable developing countries such as ours to achieve economic and social progress.

