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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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STATEMENT

by

Senator The Honourable Knowlson Gift

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the

Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

at the

**High-level Plenary Meeting of the
General Assembly**

NEW YORK

Friday September 16', 2005

Messrs. Co- Presidents,
Majesties,
Heads of State and Government ,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Five years have elapsed since we were last here in New York, and embarked on an ambitious, yet much-needed programme of action, to address what at the time, were identified as the most critical issues facing our societies. Our commitment was based on the recognition of our collective responsibility as global leaders, to work towards confronting the existing challenges, in such crucial areas as, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development, health, education, human rights, gender equality, peace and security and good governance.

We pledged as well, targeted actions aimed at protecting the more vulnerable sectors of our societies, providing for the special needs of Africa, and strengthening the institutional arrangements in support of those actions.

At our Summit in 2000, we also affirmed our faith in, and commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. On this fifth anniversary of that historic undertaking, our review of the progress made in achieving the targets which we set ourselves, must involve as well, in one or all of its several dimensions, an in-depth examination, an exercise in introspection as it were, of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization itself.

Such a review will always be, *sui generis*, polemical. The global processes which have brought into sharp focus how inextricably intertwined are our common interests, have at the same time, served to highlight stark differences which have informed national and group positions among and within geographic, economic and political blocs. Our recent and ongoing experience with the reform of the United Nations, and particularly Security Council reform, is but one of many such examples.

Of more immediate and direct interest to Trinidad and Tobago, and to similarly placed small middle income island countries, are the inequities inherent in the existing asymmetrical international economic structures, and the reticence of **several** influential players to apply remedial measures to redress those imbalances. Of particular concern are the many issues on the international trade agenda, and the disturbing lack of momentum toward the successful conclusion of the Doha development round.

Since the Millennium Summit, we have, at the highest levels, focused our efforts on these burning issues, and elaborated far reaching recommendations in areas of special interest to developing countries. These areas include development financing, sustainable development, HTV/AIDS, and children. We have sought also to give institutional attention to the special circumstances of least developed and land-locked developing countries, and small island developing states, and have formulated a comprehensive programme for Africa's development. Yet the impact of our interventions has to date been limited. We need to do more. **WE MUST DO MORE.**

In the context of the sterling efforts of many developing countries, to take ownership of their development responsibilities, and overcome at times seemingly unsurmountable challenges, we welcome the initiatives that have been taken to reduce the debt burden of the most economically disadvantaged among us.

We applaud as well, those developed country partners which have achieved ODA donor targets, and those which continue to seek out innovative means, to supplement development financing shortfalls.

In Trinidad and Tobago, we have aspired to achieve the objectives contained in our 20/20 Vision for national development, and have provided assistance to others in our own region and beyond, to the extent permitted by resources and attendant circumstances.

Yet as we speak, well over one billion people continue to live in extreme poverty and tens of thousands die from preventable diseases everyday. Only recently we were confronted with a situation where in excess of one million people faced starvation in Niger.

We also continue to be faced with the threat posed by terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the untenable situations of those large sectors of humanity who are affected by civil war and less than acceptable human rights practices.

At the same time, we share the view that there will be no security without development, and conversely no development without security. We are equally concerned, that discontent will continue to be bred and fueled, in societies in which the benefits of global economic growth do not touch the majority, and in a world where cultures and civilizations are marginalized on the basis of differences