



Statement by

H.E. The Hon. Dr. Terrance M. Drew

Prime Minister of the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis

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Please check against delivery

Madam President, Secretary-General António Guterres, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, friends of conscience and colleagues in the cause of civilisation — and to my fellow Kittitians and Nevisians at home and across the seas: I bring you greetings from our twin-island Federation, and I bring you a plea that must no longer be deferred.

GLOBAL DIPLOMACY

Madam President, for eighty years this Assembly has been a harbour for hope. From these benches ideas were born that banished hunger, cured children of disease and stitched torn treaties back together. We have reason to honour what has been achieved: rights extended, ladders out of poverty raised, medicines and measures moved across borders. Yet alongside those triumphs are truths we must not hide: partial pledges, procrastination and the persistent practice of putting profit before people. Where progress has been made, too often it has been piecemeal; where promises have been given, too often they have been broken.

We meet now at a moment of moral measure. The map of human destiny is not drawn merely by the large or the loud but by the just and the judicious. Diplomacy that is polite, but passive, is not enough. Language must be matched by labour; pledges must be partnered by payment and rhetoric must be redeemed by results. St. Kitts and Nevis stands ready to work, to partner and to perform — but we ask of the great actors in this global drama a simple thing: and that is to transform your capacity into compassion. Change the calculus of comfort for the calculus of climate justice.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam President, we are a people who measure time not by years alone but by storms. Imagine an elder fisherman, hands like weathered rope, watching the reef that used to cradle his nets die away until there is nothing left to catch but memories. Imagine schoolrooms without roofs and homes without running water. These are not metaphors for us; these are our fears at the turn of every hurricane season.

The climate science is stern and the signs are severe. Heat that hangs like a heavy blanket smothers harvests and hardens the soil. Seas that swell swallow beaches where families once played cricket in the sand; storms that arrive more often, that intensify in hours from category one to five, arrive with total fury and leave devastation in their wake. When a single hurricane can steal years of a nation's GDP in a single night, the ledger of Gross National Income becomes a misleading measure of wellbeing.

This is the anatomy of an injustice: the emissions that warm the planet are poured by the many into an atmosphere owned by no one — and paid for most dearly by the few, by our large ocean states. What was forged by centuries of industrial development now returns as tempest and trial to those least responsible. That is not merely an accident of geography — it is a failure of stewardship, a moral failing we must name and a responsibility we must repair.

We therefore welcome the ICJ's landmark ruling on the responsibility of states for climate change, and which makes clear that under international law, States have a binding duty to protect our planet from the escalating climate crisis. We must do

better! We must cut emissions deeply and quickly, scale finance fairly and urgently, and equip vulnerable nations with the tools to survive and to thrive.

I am also pleased to inform that on August 29, 2025 St. Kitts and Nevis ratified the Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) treaty. This is a historic achievement for the ocean and for multilateralism.

SUSTAINABLE ISLAND STATE AGENDA (SISA)

Madam President, Saint Kitts and Nevis has chosen to script a different future for survival and growth — one that speaks of balance, of care, and of durability. We have launched the Sustainable Island State Agenda — SISA — a deliberate blueprint that sets our course to 2040. SISA is not a slogan; it is a structured mechanism that places people at the centre of progress and entwines sustainability with prosperity. It is guided by seven pillars — Energy Transition, Water Security, Food and Nutrition Security, Sustainable Industries, Sustainable Settlements, Circular Economy, and Health and Social Protection — each pillar reinforcing the others like ribs holding up the body of a nation that intends to continue standing strong.

Our path under SISA is both practical and poetic. We are reimagining energy so that the power that lights our homes does not darken another nation's future. We are investing in water as a right, not a luxury — drilling wells, restoring reservoirs, and integrating desalination powered by the sun so that a child need not learn to ration. We are reworking food systems, so farmers can feed nations, not just our markets. We are building homes that will shelter hope in the time of storm; hospitals that will heal in the time of shock and schools that will kindle the skills to continue economic

diversification. These are not abstract ambitions. They are concrete commitments — a 70,000-gallon-per-day solar desalination plant already commissioned and a two-million-gallon desalination plant nearing completion; geothermal drilling in Nevis supported by multilateral finance to power both of our islands and beyond; an ambitious Smart Homes programme; the JNF Smart Hospital initiative — all expressions of how a small nation answers a large challenge.

We are taking bold, tangible actions that demonstrate how sustainability can be sewn into the simplest seams of daily life. The SISA vision mobilises resources, aligns ministries, elevates visibility, and—most importantly—invites society into shared responsibility. It is an audacious plan because audacity is required of small states when the storm approaches.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Madam President, distinguished colleagues, just last week this Assembly took a vital step forward when the United Nations adopted, by consensus, a progressive resolution that revitalises the Commission on the Status of Women. Saint Kitts and Nevis was honoured to co-facilitate this resolution alongside Ireland — a natural partner for equity, sustainability, and resilience. Saint Kitts and Nevis has made the empowerment, protection and upliftment of women and girls a cornerstone of our national agenda. Today, our Parliament boasts the highest number of female members in our nation's history and it is led — proudly — by a woman Speaker of the House. This is not symbolic; it is structural. It is proof that when women lead, nations rise. Our Sustainable Island State Agenda is deeply rooted in gender equality. By empowering women and girls, we are not only advancing fairness; we are

reinforcing resilience. For we know this truth: when women are given the tools to thrive; families flourish, communities strengthen and nations become unshakable.

ADOPTION OF THE MVI SHOWS WHAT'S POSSIBLE WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER

The adoption of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index is a pivotal turning point. The MVI centres vulnerability — not just income — as the criterion for concessional financing. For countries like ours, which may register as "high-income" on the basis of statistical averages yet can be economically annihilated by a single climatic event, this change is life-saving. Where GDP is a static snapshot, the MVI is a living lens — it sees susceptibility, it weighs shocks, it measures exposure.

The MVI can unlock concessional finance for resilience, transform loans into lifelines, and ensure that the reality of risk is not lost in translation. Let us now move from recognition to realisation — from the adoption of the MVI to its full institutionalisation across the World Bank, across the IMF, across regional development banks; let us bake vulnerability into the architecture of global finance so that resilience is not the exception but the expectation.

REFORM OF THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE AND BRIDGETOWN INITIATIVE

Distinguished colleagues, talk of reform must not be timid. The architecture of international finance was largely built in a different century for a different world. That architecture must be remodelled so that it reflects the realities of today: climate

risk, transnational inequality, and the asymmetric impacts that fall upon the smallest and most exposed.

Saint Kitts and Nevis affirms its staunch support for the Bridgetown Initiative and with our region's clarion call for financial and climate justice. The Bridgetown Initiative offers a practical, principled platform to alter debt dynamics, to reposition credit flows toward green investments, and to operationalise liquidity instruments that protect the vulnerable. We ask this Assembly and our global partners to help convert initiative into instrument and to shift rhetoric into reflowing capital for resilience. The mission of the United Nations — peace, development and human rights — is not advanced by preserving an architecture that perpetuates fragility. Reform is justice; reform is prudence; reform is protection and equity.

AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

I want to acknowledge the deep significance of the recent Africa-CARICOM Summit, a historic convening that rekindles bonds severed by the brutality of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and colonization. This diplomatic meet was a profound moment of remembrance, resistance, and reconnection. We gathered as descendants of a common ancestry, forging a shared agenda for reparatory justice, trade, transport, investment, sustainability, peace and security, climate action and technical cooperation. Our partnership sounds loud, not only a call for financial redress, but for justice. Reparatory justice is not just about giving money, it is about correcting a moral wrong.

For centuries, our ancestors were forced to work, beaten to work, dehumanized to work for free. Yet when emancipation came, it was not the enslaved who received reparations, but their enslavers. This moral inversion must be corrected. As part of this broader historical reckoning, I also amplify the call for the full exoneration of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a global Black icon, Pan-Africanist, and prophet of liberation. While we welcome the posthumous pardon granted to him, we continue to petition for his full exoneration. Let us correct this error in the record of justice.

Today, we stand not in anger, but in resolve. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” With our African brothers and sisters, as a nation and a region, we will continue to bend that arc toward justice, toward cohesion, and toward a future shaped not by the chains of history, but by the power of solidarity.

SUSTAINABLE ZONES OF PEACE AND SECURITY

There is a phrase I hold dear: peace is not the absence of noise; peace is the presence of safety. For those of us in the Caribbean, peace is a practical prerequisite for prosperity. Our zone of peace must be more than a slogan pasted on policy papers. It must be defended by concrete measures: better public health frameworks, stronger interdiction of illicit weapons, greater cooperation on maritime security, investment in community safety and youth employment programmes, and international support for capacity building in policing and justice systems.

We recognise the serious threats posed by drug trafficking and other transnational crimes. These scourges must be addressed through cooperation, dialogue, respect for sovereignty and the full respect for the principles of international law. Therefore, we continue to call for measures that encourage peace, stability and mutual respect. These are the only foundations on which lasting security and sustainable development can be built and maintained in our Hemisphere. Historically, in our region, disputes have been resolved through dialogue. As such, we encourage dialogue between our two friends — the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the United States of America — to ensure that our region remains a zone of peace.

We are not asking for pity or imposition. We are asking for partnership — for tools to block the flow of guns and the flow of funds that fuel violence; for initiatives that create opportunities so that young men and women find purpose in productive work rather than perilous pursuits. Partnership, not pity; prevention, not punishment.

And yet, Madam President, partnership alone is not enough. The time has come to reshape the United Nations itself — to reform its structures so that they reflect the realities of our modern world. The Security Council — the very body charged with maintaining international peace and security — cannot be credible if it excludes representation from the region's most vulnerable to the threats of our time: Africa, Latin America and Small Island Developing States — such as those in our Caribbean. To secure a world of peace, those who suffer the sharpest edges of insecurity must have a seat at the table where peace is forged.

Across the globe conflict continues to wreak havoc — Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen — and each theatre of violence is a theatre

of human cost: children displaced, parents bereft, infrastructure destroyed. The pathway to peace is hard and long, but there is no ethical alternative to persistent and constructive diplomacy, to humanitarian corridors that put people above politics and the courage and will of leaders to commit to a world rooted in peace, justice and compassion. St. Kitts and Nevis calls for an end to the anguish caused by the horrific genocide that is unfolding in Gaza. We categorically condemn this affront to humanity, for which there must be accountability. We urge for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, for the protection of civilians, for the release of hostages, and for the restoration of basic necessities and humanitarian access. International law, conscience and human decency demand no less. Further, the path to lasting peace between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, one that guarantees human rights, dignity, and security for all, lies in the implementation of a two-state solution.

HAITI

Madam President, distinguished delegates, our region remains incomplete while Haiti suffers. Haiti's struggle is our shame if we do not respond with resolve. The people of Haiti carry within them an extraordinary history of emancipation and courage. Yet that history has been marred by instability, natural disasters and foreign interventions that have too often deepened dependency and deprivation rather than delivered dignity.

Saint Kitts and Nevis and the Caribbean Community welcome the commitments of partner states — notably the Kenya-led Multinational Security Support mission and the backing of the OAS and other regional actors — to help restore security and to assist in rebuilding Haitian institutions. But security is only the first step. We must

invest in Haiti's health, education, agriculture, infrastructure and governance. We must help rebuild markets so that merchants trade rather than flee, we must help rebuild schools so that children learn rather than languish, we must help rebuild hospitals so that mothers are treated rather than traumatised. Haiti must be allowed to write and lead its own restoration story — and the international community must be a steadfast partner, not a scriptwriter.

CUBA

The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba is a relic that continues to wound an entire people and weaken regional solidarity. Year after year this Assembly has affirmed that the embargo is gravely unjust. Saint Kitts and Nevis joins the Caribbean Community in calling for its end and for Cuba's removal from the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, which isolates it from commerce and cooperation.

Cuba ha sido desde hace mucho tiempo amiga del Caribe. Sus médicos y educadores han estado entre los socios más generosos de la región. Nuestra asociación continua con Cuba siempre estará firmemente cimentada en el respeto a los derechos humanos y a los derechos laborales, en plena conformidad con el derecho internacional.

Una Cuba más fuerte y sostenible no solo mejora el bienestar de sus propios ciudadanos, sino también la seguridad y sostenibilidad de toda la cuenca del Caribe. Cuando las islas comparten tormentas, debemos compartir soluciones. Las sanciones no salvan vidas; la solidaridad sí.

English: Cuba has long been a friend to the Caribbean. Cuba's doctors and educators have been among the region's most generous partners. Our continued partnership

with Cuba will always be uncompromisingly grounded in respect for human rights and labour rights, in full alignment with international law. A stronger, more sustainable Cuba enhances not only the well-being of its own citizens but the security and sustainability of the entire Caribbean basin. When islands share storms, we must share solutions. Sanctions do not save lives; solidarity does.

TAIWAN

The theme of this Eightieth Session, “Better together,” asks us to imagine a world in which inclusion is operationalised. Excluding Taiwan from agencies where it can and must contribute — such as the World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization — undermines global capacity for collective problem solving. Taiwan’s contributions in public health, technology and disaster response are not partisan; they are practical. To keep a door closed on cooperation in these domains is to take a risk the world cannot afford.

Excellencies, the Taiwan Strait is not merely a lane on a map; it is a lifeline of commerce and human connection. We must urge calm, counsel conversation, and choose the diplomacy of dialogue over the dramatics of discord. Trade, travel, and talks are how we protect the livelihoods of ordinary people — whether in Taipei, Tallinn, or the twin islands of our Federation.

TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE, THE UNSEEN MAJORITY

I speak also to young people — those whose futures will be most shaped by what we do here. Your anger at injustice is justified; your impatience is prophetic. We need your innovation, your indignation and your insistence on better governance.

Give us your ideas and we will give you the institutions to implement them. Education must be practical and futuristic: training in renewable technologies, digital skills, sustainable agriculture. The ASPIRE programme — Achieving Success through Personal Investment, Resources, and Education, our national effort to invest in children’s futures, is an example of how we seed hope at the roots.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished colleagues, when we accept the verse that says “we shall overcome,” we must pair it with the refrain “we shall act.” The triumph of the twentieth century was not inevitable; it was the product of people who chose courage over comfort. The triumph of this century will be no less possible, if we choose it.

This Assembly has the capacity to imbue policy with compassion, to turn knowledge into kindness, to render solidarity not as sentiment but as system. Let us be architects of a world where smallness is not a sentence but a strength; where islands like ours are recognised as laboratories of resilience rather than limit cases of neglect; where being “better together” means binding ourselves in common cause, common finance and common care.

May we be brave enough to act, willing enough to partner and wise enough to ensure that when future generations ask what we did at this turning point, their answer will not be “they hesitated,” but “they acted and acted together.”

Thank you.

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