



**PERMANENT MISSION OF SAINT LUCIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY

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Madame President, in the words of the late Abraham Lincoln: the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America: *"The most reliable way to predict the future is to create it."* The words of the late President are illuminated by R. Buckminster Fuller who said and I quote: *"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete"*.

Hence, Madame President the theme for this 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations: **"Better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights"** is a trumpet call to like-minded countries to urgently reconstruct a better future for humanity.

"Building that better future together" emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and shared responsibility; which requires a framework defining a shared destiny, and that involves better coordination and coherence across different actors to deliver the most effective and sustainable responses.

In this regard Madame President, Saint Lucia, as a small island developing state, has maintained its engagement in the various processes of critical importance to its domestic agenda at the United Nations: such as climate change and sustainable development, financing for development, international ocean governance, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, revitalization of the General Assembly and decolonization. These all have a real impact on our national plans and programmes.

In the context of our development challenges the global economy is facing multiple shocks that are threatening to further retard and reverse progress on Saint Lucia's Sustainable Development.

The impact of these compounding shocks is aggravated by an unfair global financial system that is short-term oriented and crisis-prone, which further exacerbates inequalities; not to mention that Small Island Developing States (SIDS), like Saint Lucia face existential threats amplified by climate change. Despite some skeptics, there is no doubt that Climate Change is the most consequential and formidable challenge facing SIDS. In fact, the latest scientific projections portend a grim future.

Consequently, addressing the climate crisis is imperative for the survival and well-being of humanity, transcending national borders regardless of size or wealth. Prioritizing climate action is not just an environmental issue but a moral obligation to protect human life, uphold global stability, and ensure a sustainable and equitable future for all of humanity. The recent advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which was requested by this General Assembly, now also frames climate action as a legal responsibility.

Hence, there is an urgent need to accelerate global momentum towards the ambitious targets across various international agreements and development agendas. A common thread across these instruments is the need to address the unique vulnerabilities and special circumstances of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Madame President, we also work in the UN context to strengthen relations with countries and regions and encourage cooperation, while remaining staunch advocates of the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the rule of law and the process of multilateralism.

And Saint Lucia agrees with the UN Secretary General that: "Multilateralism is not an option but a necessity as we build back a better world with more equality and resilience, and a more sustainable world." for we are confronted with challenges and threats largely emanating from the unilateral actions of powerful developed countries; and it is through the multilateral system of the United Nations that we can find comfort and the support to meet these challenges.

However, the erosion of global trust, intensified by geopolitical divisions, economic disparities, and ongoing crises, threatens international cooperation and stability. As nations prioritize self-interest over collective well-being, diplomatic relations weaken, and multilateral efforts falter.

Madame President, while global solidarity is essential to uphold human rights it is also important to support self-determination, especially for marginalized and colonized nations. Recognizing their right to independence fosters justice, equality, and dignity; and builds inclusive, sovereign societies, that reinforce the universal principle that all peoples deserve freedom and self-governance.

It is for this reason Madame President that the world must act to bring an end to the gruesome carnage and injustices being perpetrated in Gaza on the Palestinian people and this must start with the implementation of the scores of resolutions that have been passed by the UN since 1947, which call for the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination.

Madame President, I draw attention in particular to Resolution 3236 of 1974, which reaffirmed the unassailable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property.

In Saint Lucia's reaffirmation of its commitment to human dignity, equality and justice Madame President, the ongoing Israeli military operations in Gaza and the West Bank raise serious concerns about the humanitarian impact on innocent civilians, which has exceeded disturbing, alarming and unacceptable parameters.

Madame President, dropping bombs on civilians – defenseless men, women and children – cannot constitute a defense of oneself. Using starvation as a method of so-called warfare cannot constitute defense of oneself. Madame President, the destruction of hospitals, schools and places of worship in Palestine, in no way constitute self-defense and, are completely unacceptable, inhumane and atrocious.

Because Madame President, based on publicly available data from United Nations agencies; at least 66,053 Palestinians have been killed – 65,062 in Gaza and 991 in the West Bank, and of the identified fatalities at least 18,430 are children. Further, at least 247 journalists and 540 humanitarian aid workers have been killed since October 7th 2023.

Madame President, in this morbid scenario we must remind ourselves that this is not a video game; this is not science fiction and Palestinians are not imaginary people. They are human beings deserving of our collective respect, independence and protection.

Recognizing the fact of the shared humanity of both Israelis and Palestinians, should cause us to value equally the life of an Israeli and the life of a Palestinian, this would lead naturally to the fostering of dialogue and peaceful solutions to ensure security and stability for all parties involved. Because respecting human rights and protecting all civilian lives must remain at the forefront of international efforts to resolve the conflict constructively.

Madame President, Saint Lucia's position is abundantly clear; that there is an urgent need to put an end to the intolerable and significant human suffering, civilian casualties and widespread destruction.

Hence, Saint Lucia joins with the majority of Member States which continue to call for de-escalation, dialogue, and adherence to international law to prevent further loss of life and foster a sustainable path toward peace.

The Palestinians must have their own state and full membership to the United Nations alongside the State of Israel. The only way for Israel to have secure borders is for the Palestinian people to live in their own internationally recognised homeland, in accordance with the universal right to self-determination.

Peace in the Middle East can only come from this, not from bombs, and wars, and terrorism and genocide and illegal settlements.

Madame President, I speak to you as one who is conscious of how the transatlantic slave trade inflicted unimaginable suffering, dehumanization, and economic exploitation upon millions of Africans.

This is why we are adamant about our just cause for Reparations from Europe for the African slave trade, which are, a moral imperative rooted in justice and acknowledgment of profound historical injustices that have long-lasting consequences. Unsurprisingly, Saint Lucia will sustain its condemnation of the atrocities being committed against the Palestinian people – rooted in centuries of oppression -- including the systemic undermining of Palestinian statehood.

Madame President, since 1992, the United Nations General Assembly has consistently and overwhelmingly voted for the removal of the economic sanctions imposed by the United States on Cuba. It is time for all to respect and uphold the will of the General Assembly.

Madame President, Saint Lucia has consistently called for an end to the US embargo on Cuba and its removal from the list of state sponsors of terrorism because such measures hinder regional progress and stability. Engaging Cuba diplomatically rather than isolating it would unlock

opportunities to foster regional cooperation – critical for long-term peace and development in the Caribbean, as well as to create an improved security architecture for the entire hemisphere.

This pragmatic approach aligns with global efforts to promote sovereignty, respect, and mutual understanding, demonstrating that diplomacy and constructive dialogue are more effective strategies than unilateral sanctions.

Madame President, ending Russia's war in Ukraine is essential to restoring peace, respecting sovereignty, and preventing further humanitarian catastrophe. The ongoing conflict has caused immense loss of life, displacement of millions, and widespread destruction, destabilizing the region and threatening global security.

Hence, ceasing hostilities would demonstrate respect for international law and sovereignty, encouraging negotiations over continued violence.

Madame President, renewing our commitment to multilateralism also means that member states must take measures to reduce tensions and settle disputes in areas where if not checked, conflict and war would prevail. It is for this reason that Saint Lucia renews calls for the United Nations to allow Taiwan to meaningfully participate in the UN system. And I state categorically, Madame President, that UN resolution 2758 of 1971 does not preclude Taiwan's inclusion and participation in the United Nations system.

Madame President, Haiti faces an unprecedented humanitarian crisis marked by political instability, widespread poverty, environmental degradation, and a fragile healthcare system; all compounded by intractable gang violence. Hence, the urgent need for international support is critical to prevent further deterioration of living conditions, protect vulnerable populations, and restore law and order as well as basic services like education and healthcare.

Without immediate action, Haiti risks spiraling into deeper chaos, increased violence, and prolonged suffering that will destabilize the region and undermine global efforts for stability and development.

This is why Saint Lucia is extremely concerned that the multinational security support mission is woefully short of the personnel and equipment it needs to effectively pursue its mandate. Of the \$900 million the UN anticipated raising for Haiti, only 9.2% of this has been received. The UN Secretary General has best described this: "as shamefully overlooked and woefully underfunded".

Madame President, on the 29 January 2014 the leaders of the community of Latin America and Caribbean states (CELAC) declared this region as a zone of peace; it was a declaration based on a commitment to upholding the principles of the UN Charter; it was based on the understanding that peace was necessary for the development of the peoples of the region and that peace in the region contributed to international peace and security.

As recently as 13th June this year, at the Brazil - Caribbean Summit in Brasília, the Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining the region as a Zone of Peace. It is in this context therefore, that Saint Lucia, like other CARICOM Member States views with concern recent developments in the region, which have aggravated tensions between Venezuela and the United States. We pray that this tension does not degenerate into violence; hence, maintaining our region as a zone of peace.

It is also in the context of the Latin American and Caribbean region as a Zone of Peace that Saint Lucia is concerned over developments between Venezuela and the CARICOM member state of Guyana in relation to the border dispute between the two countries. Saint Lucia urges the non-use of force on that issue and reliance on the multilateral mechanisms that are in place for resolving it.

Saint Lucia prioritizes diplomacy over violence, believing dialogue fosters peaceful coexistence, and safeguards sovereignty. Small nations like ours can advocate effectively through non-violent diplomacy, demonstrating its moral and pragmatic strength.

Consequently, we have a moral obligation to promote peace, development, and human rights through collective leadership rooted in respect, diplomacy, and multilateral cooperation.

However, Madame President, we have to accept that the UN's core mission is being ignored and disrespected when we witness the undeniable genocide that is being committed against the people of Palestine, especially in Gaza. Growing famine, widespread starvation and malnutrition are contributing to the carnage.

In the words of the UN Secretary-General, Palestinians in Gaza are "enduring a human catastrophe of epic proportions". Further, the recent attacks on Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Qatar speak to a violation of the UN Charter, which has now become normalized.

We cannot deny that the UN's core mission is being snubbed and disregarded, when after three years, Russia continues to flout international law and the UN Charter with its unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

We have to concede that the UN's core mission is being disparaged and treated with utter contempt in the sixty-three-year-old unproductive, unjust and illegal economic embargo that has been imposed on the Government and people of Cuba despite the many UN resolutions calling for its removal.

And we have to agree that the UN's core mission is being disregarded in the conflict in the Sudan.

These shocks to the UN's core mission should be of concern to all member states; but they are of particular concern to all small island developing states (SIDS) like Saint Lucia, not just because these conflicts threaten world peace in general but because they are symptomatic of a departure from multilateralism and the adoption of the outdated notion that might is right.

Clearly, Madame President, violence is not in consonance with the requirements of our times. In fact it is abundantly clear that military dominance, which is an expired currency of a bygone era; is not moral tender and cannot purchase peace and stability in the contemporary global political environment.

- The Old military order, though fraught with contradictions, is pregnant with renewal; without guidance, its offspring may be disfigured by conflict, but with diplomacy as the midwife, this troubled gestation can deliver a new era of peace and stability.
- The World's intolerance for the carnage in Gaza and the West Bank is symptomatic of its resentment for needless bloodshed;
- While military superiority enables death and destruction, it cannot resolve the spectrum of challenges that we, as a global family, are called upon to confront, within the framework of our integrated whole.

Madame President, the UN80 Initiative is essential to revitalize the UN's effectiveness amid crises, enhancing multilateralism to restore trust and address issues like climate change and inequality.

Madame President, despite challenges like limited enforcement, vetoes, and geopolitical interests, the UN remains a valuable conflict resolution tool. We should leverage the UN to advance economic and social priorities and a stronger international response to global issues.

Hence, a new model for the United Nations should prioritize reforming its decision-making processes to enhance efficiency, accountability, and inclusivity, addressing current limitations like veto power and bureaucratic inertia.

This model would shift towards a more equitable representation, empowering developing nations and marginalized groups, ensuring their voices influence global solutions. It would strengthen the UN's capacity for rapid response to crises, integrating innovative approaches like technology and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

By fostering transparency and accountability, this new model would rebuild global trust, making the UN a more effective, responsive, and equitable platform for advancing peace, sustainable development, and human rights in an increasingly interconnected world.

This model will give birth to an international environment of peace, of the absence of major conflicts and wars, of the decline of unilateralism, of a greater functioning multilateralism that protects us from climate change and climate injustice, from the scourge of illegal weapons smuggled into our countries, an international environment where nations honour their financial commitments and responsibilities, and respect and promote human rights, that supports our efforts at regional integration.

Madame President, this model would be a fine testament that after eighty years, multilateralism would be in a good place and that with the United Nations we can expect that in the years ahead, there will be more peace, greater development and the prevalence of human rights.

Let us choose it! Let us reach for it!

Because afterall, in the words of *R. Buckminster Fuller*: "*We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims*". **Madame President, I thank you**