



Prime Minister

Dr. The Hon. W. Baldwin Spencer

Antigua and Barbuda Statement

UN Summit on Sustainable Development

Rio de Janeiro

20th June, 2012

Rio 2012 Statement

Thank you Mr. Chair.

Sir Life is about perspective. 20 years ago, the nations of the world gathered in this city and took a serious look at the state of the world and made a declaration. Leaders from rich and poor countries, democracies and dictatorships all looked at the state of technology, poverty, health and environment and realized something; there were real problems facing this world. But the leaders did not stop there; they also declared that there was no problem facing the global community that could not be solved. All it required was commitment and

action from all of us, developed and developing countries;
government, civil society and the private sector.

Today, 20 years later, we have returned to this great city of

Rio de Janeiro to take a new perspective on the Future We

Want Some of us are looking with fresh eyes, some have been working toward achieving these commitments for the last 20 years but what will prove true from this process is that the perspective we will gather will be more than a mere snapshot.

It will be a holistic analysis of what we have done, how we have grown, where we have succeeded and yes, where we have come up short. The 1992 Rio Declaration was but a nascent being, but now after 20 years of planning, cultivation

and implementation, we should have a clearer vision, a better understanding and better defined goals.

Antigua and Barbuda aligns itself with the statements made by Algeria on behalf G77 and China and Nauri on behalf of SIDs.

Mr. Chair

It is certain that there has been some progress in our quest for sustainable development. However, when we look at the reality from the perspective of the three pillars of sustainable development, it thus becomes evident that the road to sustainable development, which one would have hoped, after 20 years, would more resemble a multi-lane highway, has

deteriorated into to a narrow, winding and treacherous path up aslippery slope. The challenges for present and future generations continue to grow. The facts are clearer than ever, the inequality among nations is increasing at an alarming rate; development challenges faced by developing countries such as Antigua and Barbuda are creating levels of uncertainty that were both unseen and unimagined. The threats to the world economic environment have become larger with each passing year and the impacts felt in Small Island Developing States, similar to Antigua and Barbuda, are immensely disproportionate to the negligible acts of destruction by our own people. Mr. Chairman, Climate change, financial crisis, over fishing are problems not caused by us, yet we are called here to carry that burden.

Over these 20 years, we have negotiated, debated, strong-armed, compromised, capitulated, collapsed and agreed.

Through processes of surveys, studies, round tables, working groups and conventions we have produced a plethora of declarations, plans, development goals, accords and reports. I think it is fair to say we have shown we can work together, but have we shown that we can work this work together???

After 20 years, we know the problems intimately. We know there is climate change. We know there is over fishing. We know there is runaway species loss. We know sea level rise and we know global warming. And we know these existed in 1992 and today in 2012... 20 years later they are still here now. My country is here to renew our commitment to do the

work together and to find people centered solutions but Mr. Chairman, a fundamental system of access to reliable and low cost financing is a must. This time around, countries will need to know what is it going to cost to get us there...!!!!

Deleted: We know that there are women in this world still being subjugated. We know there are needless epidemics and starvation. We know. And so today, with all this knowledge, all these leaders here, all this global goodwill, we need to take what we know and change it into what we can do. And what we can do is ensure the adoption of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the establishment and rapid mobilization of a trust fund intended to support developing countries in promoting sustainable

Mr. ChairMan

In 2008, Antigua and Barbuda, like many developing countries suffered a massive destabilization of our economy. This was not because we had mismanaged our resources nor was there

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a failure in our local or regional governance structures. We

are all well aware that the global financial systems are

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structured to favour the largest, biggest and most powerful of

us all. Developing countries are expected to do their part yet

they have very limited access to financial capital. Ladies and

gentlemen when I look at what are the bottle necks the limiting factors we have here, the access of developing countries to the financial capital they need to capture our own reforms in a fair and equitable manner.

Chair

Citizens and the private sector of developed countries are able to access capital so they can meet most agreements that their Governments have entered into on their behalf. Our citizens and private sector have limited access to finance. Where they do have access financial capital is at a much higher interest rates than their counterpart in developed countries. Mr. Chairman, I am calling for all gathered here today to agree that as long as this condition exists, it would be difficult for

developing countries like Antigua and Barbuda to meet any sustainable development goals.

Sir I stand here today to further call for a development plan, and a process, that will identify mechanisms that can level this every growing uneven playing field.

Sir All citizens of the world should have the same access to finance at the same rates. This may sound far-fetched but I believe this is possible and it is in fact necessary.

The development of Green economies start with the private sector and citizens in all countries having the same access finance at the same cost.

To this end, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda will support a process to reform the of international financial system taking into full consideration the impacts it will have

on developing countries to meet their sustainable development goals.

Mr. Chairman

My country calls on development partners to look
with us into the issue of debt of developing countries
and the forgiveness of this debt so that countries like mine
can focus on our new
and existing mandates to reform our economies and protect our en
vironment. Many SIDS through no fault of their own are
saddled with a choking debt burden, the lack of reliable, low cost
capital, but we are still
expected to meet the challenges of economic shocks, natural
disasters caused by climate change and sea level rise. Mr.

Chairman we would love to announce here that Antigua and Barbuda will be protecting 10%...20%...maybe even 50% of our natural assets but how can we?. We do not have access to the funds to do so?.

Mr. Chairman

Antigua and Barbuda, like many other Small Island Developing states, has stated its desire and commitment to realizing a green economy, but if we reflect on the record, our achievements in this regard have yet to reach the desired levels. It is for this reason that we remind our development partners of their stated commitments to assist developing countries in achieving real milestones in sustainable development. To this extent, we call on the development and

mobilization of appropriate mechanisms for meaning full and immediate international financial reforms.

Sir with respect to technology transfer, Antigua and Barbuda calls for a plan for us to set milestones, for there are so many areas where we can use transfer of technologies to SIDs and other developing countries. For Antigua and Barbuda, we are calling for assistance in the distribution of renewable energy to developing countries at a cost less than that of conventional energy. We need energy now we need affordable energy now countries should be in a position to have the choice of renewables. We need a mechanism to transfer this and other technologies at a competitive or even lower price than conventional energy.

Sir, we can all play our part in the Future we want, I am calling for a plan to enable us to truly to do so!!!!

Ladies and gentlemen, We would like to express our profound gratitude to the president and people of Brazil for their support of this international process and of course their warm hospitality to my delegation. This is a historic moment for all of us and it is my determination that Antigua and Barbuda will continue to do the work with all of our partners, developed and developing to make the vision of the Future we want a reality.

Thank you Mr. Chair