

Statement by
The Honourable Dr. Denzil L. Douglas
Prime Minister of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis
At the Second South Summit
Of the Group of 77 and China
Doha, Qatar. June 15, 2005

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, permit me first to express sincere thanks and gratitude to His Highness, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, and to the Government and people of Qatar for their warm hospitality, that has truly been beyond compare. Allow me also to congratulate them for the successful hosting of this summit.

I would also like to extend congratulations to you Mr. Chairman, my most distinguished CARICOM colleague, in your competent handling of these very crucial affairs of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman, five years ago in Havana, at the dawn of the new millennium, I joined with other leaders of the Group of 77 and China in formulating a framework of co-operation which would help our developing countries seize the opportunities afforded us, while overcoming obstacles to our development.

Since then, a number of critical events have occurred which we could not have envisaged and which have made it incumbent upon us to look again at the earlier framework with a view towards making it more effective and more relevant to current realities. Notable among the events were the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and more recently the South Asia Tsunami and Hurricane Ivan's devastation of several Caribbean countries last year. Along with these is the continuing effect of Globalisation as it forges ahead.

Globalisation has shown us how inextricably linked we all are, as the effects of the fall out from the above events reached far and wide, to a greater or lesser extent.

No one could have predicted with any great accuracy that threats to peace and security would have affected us so greatly, especially on our Tourism industry in the Caribbean. One could neither have imagined that environmental phenomena could be so catastrophic, nor that we would be so ill prepared to cope. And with all of the glorified promises of Globalisation, those of us in the G77 and China could not have envisaged that the gap in the wealth between the developed and developing countries would have continued to widen.

Despite our commitments and best efforts over the last five years, we, of the International Community, regional CARICOM Governments, institutions and community based groups, remained gripped with the problems related to HIV/AIDS and other communicable and non-communicable diseases that continue to impact heavily on our

human resource and threaten to reverse the socio-economic gains of our peoples of the developing world.

Mr. Chairman, five years ago in Havana, the people and Government of St. Kitts and Nevis had not envisaged the devastating effects of Globalisation on our three hundred year old sugar industry, which is currently transiting from the production and sale of sugar to the European market. The effect of this is devastating to our national economy and thousands of workers who are being displaced.

In fact, these four areas - security, environmental problems, under-development, and health concerns, have been particularly challenging to the lives of the people of the G77 and China over the past five years.

What I seem to observe, Mr. Chairman, is the tendency for us to react to unanticipated challenges from the weak position of un-preparedness. We need to change that way of operating. One of the challenges before us must be to strengthen the base from which we must cope with the unexpected. We must arm ourselves with the means to better chart our destiny so as to ensure an outcome favourable to us. And we need to begin to do so now.

It is imperative that we take Globalisation and shape it to our realities. The very fact that we are here today suggests our interest in strengthening South-South cooperation. And strengthen it we must. Cooperation is key in all areas of development. We have to be prepared to be our brother's keeper not only regarding environmental problems, but also in regard to peace and security as well as in the broader goal of development.

Mr. Chairman, over the next five years we must seek to bring our relationship with the North on a more equal footing; the goal should be to attain a relationship of equal partnership and mutual respect. We must move away from a relationship of merely accepting what is offered. We, too, have a lot to offer and at the same time, we must be in a position to determine for ourselves our own needs and our desires and how best to attain them. This has to be the new method of forging a more equitable partnership with our global partners of the North.

It would be remiss of me Mr. Chairman, if I did not underscore at this point, an example of what we in the South have to offer and how co-operation benefits us all. We in the Caribbean Community have established the Pan Caribbean Partnership (PANCAP) in combating HIV/AIDS. The partnership has proven so commendable that the United Nations has identified it as a best practice model. This shows the strength we have together and how the lessons learnt can be adopted in other regions in South-South Cooperation.

Mr. Chairman, the International Community is in transition. Later this year, many of us will be meeting again to help determine the direction in which the United Nations will be heading. Many of the decisions that we make here today could be a precursor to what is

presented in September. This is our moment to forge a strong position, and we must seize the opportunity.

For this reason, I emphasize that we must work together and be proactive in our thinking. In this regard, my Government would like to see a framework for dealing with the unexpected, developed. We would like to see all members of this Group develop more resilience to the many challenges that undoubtedly lie ahead. We would like to see our economies strengthened through co-operation with each other. We would like to see the environmental sensitivities of each country taken into consideration by all, and we would like to see assistance being provided to each other when we are faced with humanitarian crises.

In keeping with this, my Government supports the development of a “Rapid Response Mechanism” for the countries of the *G77* and China to deal with unexpected shocks of a global nature.

Mr. Chairman, we have a very diverse mix of countries comprising this group of developing countries. We vary in physical size, in resource endowment, and in economic strength, among other things. Some of us are large, while some are small. Some are land-locked, and some are islands. Some of us are resource rich, and others are resource poor. But we have banded together in an understanding that our countries individually as well as collectively can be strengthened through co-operation and that we can turn diversity into a source of strength. Let us strive harder to make this a reality.

It is in this context we fully endorse the proposal of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani for "The South Fund for Development and Human Circumstances." We commend him for The State of Qatar's initial contribution of \$20 Million in the launching of the fund.

And so Mr. Chairman, at this juncture, let us learn from the experiences of the past and let us together prepare for a challenging, yet promising future, with the knowledge that a deeper understanding and greater cooperation between ourselves can surely carry us further than we have attained thus far.

I thank you.