



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

“We Must Do What We Say”

Statement

by

**the Honourable Gaston Browne
Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda**

**at the UN Summit
on**

the Post-2015 Development Agenda

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Mr. President,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies and Colleagues

We as leaders are gathered here with one mission and with one hope of the transformation of our world by 2030.

We are a community of nations, a brotherhood and sisterhood. It is therefore important for us to understand and respect differing views, outlooks and objectives among ourselves.

At the end of this Summit, in the name of the nations we represent, we will issue a grand statement with pledges and promises.

“we pledge that no one will be left behind” and

“we commit ourselves to working tirelessly for the full implementation of this Agenda by 2030”.

Mr. President,

Previous declarations have failed to deliver on a number their promises, including the Millennium Development Goals - they remain partly unaccomplished.

Antigua and Barbuda calls on the international community to commit to the post-2015 development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, as a guide to eradicate poverty.

Inequality within and amongst countries is still unjustifiable while the the majority of the world’s poorest live in middle income countries. I appeal to developed countries to continue to hold true to past commitments including fulfilling their ODA mandate.

North-South Cooperation remains the core of this partnership and strengthened commitment from developed countries is therefore required to enhance international cooperation and scale up support for developing countries

South-South Cooperation from developing countries that are in a position to offer assistance should not be seen as a replacement of commitments by developed countries but instead be seen as complimentary to achieving sustained development..

Mr President,

More frequent and intense natural disasters, arising from Climate Change that some

countries unconscionably deny, continue to devastate small countries in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The post-2015 development agenda must address issues of climate change and environmental sustainability.

We call for strengthening of global partnerships in our efforts of resilience building, to be able to absorb internal and external shocks, increase economic viability, including the right to development and achieving sustained development.

The economic and social development initiatives by small countries, particularly in financial services, are crippled by the unilateral actions of big countries and their institutions.

Unfair and uneven trade and investment pacts are imposed upon developing countries, with little regard to the crude disadvantages that they inflict.

And, extra-territorial laws are enforced by economic pressures that developing countries cannot withstand.

Yet, Chairman, international laws are being ignored in relation to the obligations of powerful countries to weak ones.

In the Declaration, we will collectively issue;

we say that “States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures in defiance of international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries”.

But, note we do no more than “urge” States to refrain from unilateral economic, financial or trade measures”.

We do not “prohibit” them, nor do we condemn those who do apply such unilateral measures.

In that connection, our Declaration acknowledges that our countries still exist in a world of disparities, defined by power.

Despite all the grand statements and declarations that are made, we remain a world divided between rich and poor, powerful and weak, where might is right.

That is our sad reality!

Mr President,

We make a number of affirmations in the declaration that we will issue. Among them are:

Recognition “that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development”,

and that:

“Every State has, and shall freely exercise, full permanent sovereignty over all its wealth, natural resources and economic activity”.

Mr. President, from this Summit we will proclaim 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 targets.

We will also announce that the new Goals and targets will come into effect on January 1st 2016.

But, we must remind ourselves that the announcement of goals and targets is not the achievement of those goals and targets.

So, while we should take some comfort from the fact that we were able to agree on them, celebration should await their delivery.

Our nations are yet to recognise the global society in which we live, our planetary civilization and the duty of care that each county has to the other; if, we are to stop small islands from disappearing because of climate change;

Mr. President, If we are to stop the steady flow of refugees arising from poor economic conditions;

and if we are to stop the spread of disease that arises in conditions of poverty;

We must be truly committed to what we say.

So, Mr President, you will forgive me for adopting a practical and realistic view of our meeting today.

I am glad that we are holding this Summit.

And, I am glad for the Declaration that we are jointly issuing if only because it is a measure of the pledges and resolutions of all of us, to which each of us can be held.

It is the mirror in which we will see our faces in 2030.

Now, Mr. President; we must not just say what we will do; we must do what we say.

We should recommit to broadening and strengthening the voice and participation of developing countries — including African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, Small Island developing States and middle-income countries— in international economic decision-making, norm-setting and global economic governance.

Mr. President,

Small island developing states recognize the enormity of this moment and the new era into which we are approaching.

We ask the world to prioritize us because of our unique geographical characteristics.

We have no ability to change our categorization as SIDS,

we can neither graduate, upgrade nor elevate from being SIDS.

Our challenges are unique; we ask not to be marginalized for those characteristics that make us unique.

Don't marginalize us because we are fragile,

Don't marginalize us because we are vulnerable,

and don't marginalize us because we are small;

instead prioritize us for these very same reasons.

Mr. President,

In closing I would like this Summit to be remembered as a defining moment in human history.

I would like it to be the Summit whose outcome was not just another Declaration; not just another statement of goals and targets, but one that actually led to positive results.

The judgement as to whether it is such a defining moment will have to be postponed until 2030 – the date we have set to meet the goals and targets.

I hope that in 15 years' time, our peoples will not judge us harshly.

Let us create a new post-2015 global development architecture that will be truly inclusive and democratic.

A Post- 2015 world should be a world of mutual respect and understanding,
a world of collaboration, and commitment to equality of opportunities and justice.

So that the little boys and girls of Antigua and Barbuda can have the same opportunities as the little boys and little girls in the developed world,

a world where the voice of Antigua and Barbuda can be a unified voice of the world,

a world where Antigua and Barbuda's economy is allowed to flourish just like those in the developed world,

a world where all Antiguan and Barbudans and our Global brothers and sisters share the same opportunities;

because we as leaders took a stand and ensured that all peoples are happy with the new transformative post-2015 world.

Thank you, Mr President.