



STATEMENT

BY

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AT THE

UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT FOR THE ADOPTION OF
THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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PERMANENT MISSION OF BELIZE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

BELIZE Declaration of Commitment

Mr. President,

Today marks another historic milestone in the UN's global development journey. Identification and pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals were the defining first leg in that journey. Those goals galvanized international solidarity in an unprecedented fashion and laid the foundation for international cooperation on an internationally agreed development agenda.

Today the newly adopted *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* requires that development policies integrate economic, social and environmental considerations. Belize is irrevocably committed to the embrace of this agenda.

Moving forward in earnest

As a natural resource and people based economy, Belize has long pursued a holistic socially and environmentally sensitive development agenda. We have developed a national strategy that fully integrates the 17 sustainable development goals and their targets and our Cabinet has adopted a national *Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy* that was developed with the invaluable support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN.

That Strategy brings together our national development framework *Horizon 2030* and the UN's *2030 Agenda*. It speaks to an ambitious vision for our human ecology namely: *to live in peace, tranquility, and in harmony with nature, enjoying a high quality of life, and being enabled to look after our own development in a sustainable way*. We intend to operationalize this vision through four rubrics of development – (1) optimizing national income and investment; (2) enhancing social cohesion and resilience; (3) sustainably managing natural, environmental, historical and cultural assets; and (4) improving governance and citizen security. Collectively and in cooperation with our development partners we will seek to realize this vision.

Harnessing the support of a sensitive multilateral system

We know that the task ahead is a daunting one. Limited human and financial resources are enduring challenges for my country. Small in size and hard pressed to deal with multiple

exogenous shocks and diminutive fiscal space, Belize, like many other small island developing countries, is overstretched.

We repeat our concern that the graduation criteria unilaterally imposed by international financial institutions upon countries like my own make it difficult for us to access grant based and concessional financing internationally. This situation obtains, even though our small country is on the frontline of confronting the prohibitively expensive adverse impacts of climate change which contribute greatly to increased burdens to our domestic coffers in the form of high ratios of external debt to GDP. This is a blight that severely afflicts all Caribbean nations.

Recalling the *SAMOA Pathway*, the *Addis Action Agenda* and the revitalized global partnership entrenched in this new *2030 Agenda*, we are moved to call for better policies to facilitate enhanced access to international public sources of financing (especially grants and highly concessional loans) for small island developing states; better multilateral trade policies to ensure improved market access for small vulnerable economies; and more inclusive governance structures at the international level to ensure that concerns of small island developing states with middle income status are taken into account when setting and executing policies.

Our situation is further prejudiced when some of our partners from developed countries unilaterally utilize domestic measures to assess or rate our countries subjecting us to *blacklists absent any form of due process*. These measures have perpetuated what can only be called an *international disabling environment* for our small middle income countries and our equally small enterprises.

Global partnerships that put people first

Belize reaffirms the call in the *SAMOA Pathway* for genuine and durable partnerships. The most beneficial to us are those that put our people's priorities first. We continue to deepen our partnerships globally. We firmly believe that they are essential for the successful implementation of our 2030 Agenda.

Championing a climate change solution for sustainable development

Whilst improvements to the wider enabling environments and partnerships can catalyze transformation in our economies, we know that no such transformation can be sustained in the face of the dangerous, adverse impacts of climate change. In the case of SIDS, a simple storm can erase decades of development and erode the very land that sustains us. Ours may very well be the last generation that is seized of the opportunity and capacity to save the planet from the cataclysmic effects of climate change. Let us seize the moment. The Paris Climate Change Conference must deliver a robust outcome that entrenches the highest ambition to address climate change.

Towards 2030

We are at a crossroads in our development exercise. At this juncture, let us choose the right path, the sustainable and resilient path. We must safeguard mother earth. Let us do so with social and economic justice on our side and solidarity in our stride.

Today and onward there is no turning back!