



ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 64th SESSION

Statement

By

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Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

at the

**1st Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to Follow-up on
the Issues Contained in the Outcome of the Conference on the World
Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development**

11th February, 2010
New York

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Co-Chairs, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines aligns itself with the statement made by Saint Lucia on behalf of CARICOM. We also thank you, co-chairs, for your letter of 3 February 2010 and for the hard work that you have done behind the scenes over the last six months.

Co-Chairs,

Any definition of a crisis necessarily includes the element of time. This temporal aspect is what separates a crisis from an ongoing or perpetual state of difficulty or distress. A crisis is a point or period in time of instability, difficulty or danger. Any response to such a crisis must therefore be similarly grounded in elements of timeliness – urgency, rapidity, and immediacy.

To date, the United Nations is guilty of a decided *lack* of urgency in its response to the most severe global and economic crisis since the establishment of this body. Indeed, history will recall the crisis as one of the defining events of our generation. However, after a flurry of activity last year, which saw the consensus adoption of the Outcome Document of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, we have sadly lapsed into a state of comparative inertia. We cannot be proud of the fact that it has taken us six and one half months to hold our first meeting to follow up on the issues on the Outcome Document, or that this first meeting is still confined to discussing what should be discussed, rather than the critical substantive matters confronting most, if not all, of our Member States.

We hasten to add, however, that our current inertia is in no way an indictment of the Co-Chairs and their obvious hard work to date. Rather, it is a byproduct of either our comfort with the status quo of timeworn routines, or a seeming retreat from the fully multilateral approach that our consensus Outcome so ably demonstrated.

In the six and a half months that have elapsed since the adoption of the Outcome Document, countries have returned to borrowing relationships with the International Monetary Fund, and desperately sought various forms of concessional financing. Economic growth remains anemic or negative; and Member States have experienced continued economic, political and social upheaval. These are issues that we have explicitly charged ourselves to follow-up on, to address, and to seek to mitigate. We have yet to act in that regard. In our own country and region, as explained by St. Lucia on behalf of CARICOM, we have yet to see any of the mythical green shoots that populate the imaginations of more optimistic or blinkered forecasters. We anxiously await the promised coordinated input and action of the world community in these matters, not merely the prescriptions of a small subset of states – however well-meaning – that have anointed themselves the sole arbiters of our economic fate.

Co-Chairs,

The mandate of paragraph 54 of the Outcome Document and of Resolution 63/305 is that this Ad Hoc Working Group “follow up on the issues contained” in the Outcome of the Conference. As such, an exclusion of any issue that exists in the Outcome Document is an unacceptable deviation from our clear mandate. For example, the issues raised by my CARICOM colleague were hard-fought inclusions in the Outcome Document, but are difficult to locate among the suggested topics for discussion in the February 3 Letter. This is not to say that the Co-Chairs do not have the right and duty to organise and order the issues into cohesive groupings for

discussion and action with the input of Member States. However, such organisation cannot inadvertently narrow the scope of the Outcome Document or the issues therein.

Similarly, my delegation has scoured the Outcome Document and can find little mandate for the implied deference to ECOSOC and the Second Committee. This Working Group was created to act as a form of crisis response, and thus cannot simply sit on its hands in deference to the business-as-usual deliberations of other pre-existing bodies. Indeed, in as much as the Outcome Document assigned certain tasks to ECOSOC and other bodies, it is also the mandate of this Working Group to follow-up on the implementation of those tasks. “Duplication” cannot be shorthand for the avoidance of any issue contained in the Outcome, which we are duty-bound to follow-up in its entirety.

Co-Chairs,

It is the fervent wish of our delegation that this be both the first and final procedural meeting of this Ad Hoc Working Group. As we stated in the July 31 2009 adoption of Resolution 63/305 “there is no need for us to unduly delay ourselves orchestrating the dance of procedural angels on the head of a pin. . . . The urgency of the Crisis makes it imperative that we get on with the substantive work as soon as possible, and not delay ourselves – as we are wont to do – with procedural niceties.” Indeed, it would be an unfortunate indictment of both this Working Group and UN’s ability to “achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic. . .character,” as stated in our Charter, if we detain ourselves unnecessarily with procedural fiddling while our national economies burn and disintegrate.

Accordingly, we join other Member States in expressing our strong desire for regular, substantive and action-oriented meetings of this Group with new energy and purpose during the brief remainder of this Session. We also express our unreserved support of your role as co-chairs, and pledge our continued assistance and full cooperation in the fulfillment of your weighty mandate.

I thank you.