



**STATEMENT BY MRS. ELOISE GONSALVES (SPOUSE OF PRIME
MINISTER) OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ON THE
OCCASION OF SIDE EVENT ON THE MARGINS OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2021,
SPONSORED BY SCLAN**

**COVID-19 AND THE SCLAN PILLARS:
IMPACT AND SOLUTIONS**

Kingstown,
September 23, 2021

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SUBJECT: COVID-19 AND THE SCLAN PILLARS: IMPACT AND SOLUTIONS

Thank you Chair, Excellencies:

The COVID-19 pandemic has wrought a monumental, many-sided global challenge to life, living, and production. The novel coronavirus has altered markedly, for the worse, our human condition in every way. Novel, adverse circumstances have arisen demanding fresh ways of addressing our problems, be they pre-existing, extant, or emergent; novel initiatives are required.

Our situation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is further complicated by the volcanic eruptions of April 2021, which caused the evacuation of one-fifth of my country's population and the opening up of 87 shelters, and additionally affected by the current active Atlantic Hurricane Season. The consequential pain and suffering on the poor, on women, and on children are disastrous, within the very disasters of COVID, the volcanic eruptions, and climate change.

It is well-nigh impossible for a small island developing state like St. Vincent and the Grenadines, despite its solid strengths and possibilities, to address efficaciously, by itself alone, the limitations and weaknesses within our material condition. Thus, effective multi-lateral cooperation and solidarity between our country, our regional partners, and our global family of nations, are, and have, been vital. This cooperation and solidarity have eased significantly, through a range of initiatives, the material deprivation, psycho-social and security challenges of women and children. From this United Nations, the creative, supportive work of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been critical. I accordingly thank these agencies, and others; I thank, too, our dear friend, the distinguished Secretary General of the United Nations; I thank the World Bank.

Time does not permit an itemisation of the various specific novel initiatives, but without regional and internationalist solidarity, our misery would have been unbearable. Day-by-day, however, we see the sunlight rays of hope and genuine optimism about our future, despite recurring doubts. Thus, our people's resilience, our government's monumental efforts in concert with our friends abroad, and God's redemptive grace, we are lifting the burdens of our people especially the poor, the women and children.

Practically, the COVAX facility, the governments of India, the USA, Britain, and Canada have helped with vaccines. The WFP and the World Bank have provided resources for social safety net supports for the poor, for women, and children; the WHO and PAHO have assisted with health care support facilities and resources; and regional institutions such as the Caribbean Public Health Agency, the Caribbean Disaster Management Agency, and the University of the West Indies have been outstanding in helping to uplift our women and children in required supportive ways.

In all this, the advocacy of SCLAN is helpful in going forward.

I thank you!