



MESSAGE BY AMBASSADOR JOHN W. ASHE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, TO THE EIGHTIETH MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF TWENTY-FOUR ON INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AFFAIRS AND DEVELOPMENT (Washington, DC, 10 October 2008)

Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Mr. Managing Director of the IMF,
Mr. President of the World Bank,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for the invitation to address this important gathering at such a crucial time. We are in the burgeoning phase of a deep unique financial and economic crisis with origins in the largest and most highly developed economy and spreading fast to the other highly developed economies. Simultaneously we are experiencing a food and energy crisis; an environment and climate change crisis; and a crisis of confidence in policies and institutions - public and private, national and international.

Further, there is a huge credibility gap since as an international community we have failed to implement critical commitments given at the highest levels of governments and international institutions. These include commitments:

- To reform and make more coherent, inclusive and democratic the international economic and financial architecture and governance arrangements;
- To agree on a development oriented round of trade negotiations;
- To provide resources to facilitate development, in particular the 0.7% of the GNI of developed countries to developing countries and 0.15% - 0.20% to the least developed countries; and
- To implement actions to begin to mitigate the emissions of green house gases, in particular commitments under the Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, and to provide financial resources for the development of, and access to, technology for mitigation and adaptation to climate change by the most vulnerable who have contributed least to the problem.

Mr. Chairman,

These critical and mutually reinforcing crises and challenges threaten to cascade even as deadlines for the achievement of a number of targets for meeting internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, approach. We see real possibility of reversals of hard-won gains, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized in our societies. The more immediate crises outlined earlier are themselves on top of a fundamental and longstanding financial crisis in which the gaps between the rich and poor countries and between the rich and poor parts of the populations within and across countries are widening exponentially.

Mr. Chairman,

Many have been arguing, in the judgment of the Group of 77 and China, correctly, that as a global

community we face a situation comparable to that in the mid 1940's with the addition of the threat to the global environment. We also see a real possibility of countries turning inwards to seek short-term solutions to problems which are systemic, and in economies which are globalised and highly interdependent.

There is an increasing call for a review of the overall global institutional infrastructure. Some say a Bretton Woods approach is necessary, while being careful to remind that Bretton Woods took place in the context of San Francisco and Havana - that is a holistic approach.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2005 we began an effort to reform the San Francisco component -- the United Nations. We have to implement the decisions we took and, in cases, to go further. Some years ago we tried to review what was set up in place of the Havana component and did not do a good job. We have been trying for the last 10 years, from Seattle to Geneva through Cancun and Doha, to fix this but with no success as underscored by the breakdown of the Doha Development Round just last July.

We need to fix this.

There is a recommendation in the document being negotiated for the review Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Doha, Qatar, next month, for Heads of State and Government to: "acknowledge the need to convene a major international conference to review the international financial and monetary architecture and global economic governance structure".

The current financial and economic crisis and the lack of capacity of the current institutional arrangements to either have foreseen it coming or to intervene in the search for solutions have made not only the need but the urgency for it patently clear.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China takes the view that one of the most fundamental decisions that the G24 could take at this time would be to support the recommendation for that international conference, a Bretton Woods II, urgently.

This is the one message I take this opportunity to bring you today. I take this opportunity also to acknowledge the collaboration and support the Group of 77 and China has been receiving from the G24 in the preparation for participation in the Doha review conference.

I thank you for this opportunity to do so.