



OPENING REMARKS BY HONOURABLE K. D. KNIGHT, MP, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE OF JAMAICA AT THE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE OCCASION OF THE 29TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GROUP OF 77 (New York, 22 September 2005)

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,**

Our expectation when we established our agenda for this Meeting was that the High-Level Plenary would have agreed on some meaningful steps/actions to advance the implementation of the objectives and decisions of the major development oriented summits and conferences, in particular the MDGs. The 2005 World Summit Outcome can at best be described as a bag of mixed results. We have to identify how to take our countries forward in this difficult international economic environment.

We could begin by returning to our major objectives going into the High-Level Plenary Meeting and identifying the opportunities and strategies for advancing them, building on the decisions of the High-Level Plenary where appropriate. These could include:

Implementation

Implementation or the management of the implementation of decisions relating to development especially within the UN system has been one of our major concerns.

How would this function be executed in a reformed United Nations?

The ECOSOC has to be suitably empowered and strengthened to discharge this function more effectively. The outcome document has reaffirmed the role that the Charter and General Assembly have vested in ECOSOC and has identified some areas in which the Council should act. We must ensure that any reform of the UN takes these perspectives into account.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

We need a significant increase in ODA and on a predictable basis, to help us achieve the MDGs within the 2015 deadline. We had used the achievement by the developed countries of the 0.7% of their Gross National Income as ODA as indicative of a significant flow of resources to our countries. The EU has agreed on a timetable for its Members to reach that target. Five countries in Europe have already achieved the target. How can we work with the EU and other European countries to bring the wavering developed countries on board?

Trade

Changing international trade rules to make them more development oriented is critical to attaining the level of economic growth necessary to achieve the MDGs and other development objectives. The Doha Ministerial Declaration and Work Programme set out what is to be done. The Trade Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong in December 2005 is the forum to make decisions on the trading regime.

What can we do, as developing countries, to get a more satisfactory outcome from Hong Kong?

Debt

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document has “emphasise[d] the high importance of a timely, effective, comprehensive and durable solution to the debt problems of developing countries”. It has also welcomed the G-8 proposal to the IMF, IDA and the African Development Fund to cancel 100 percent of the debt of 18 HIPC countries. The debt of low-and middle income countries is also mentioned. The World Bank and IMF are to consider the G-8 proposals this week.

How can we ensure that there are no reversals?

How can we ensure that the agreements are taken forward with the required urgency?

Investment

The developed countries have pointed to Private Foreign Direct Investment as the main instrument for transferring

financial resources to developing countries. Emphasis is placed on the need for developing countries to create an enabling domestic environment to attract FDI. The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document has also stressed this point.

The experience of developing countries is that F. D. I is highly concentrated and becoming more so, with many developing countries undertaking the necessary reforms without much success.

What would really encourage a wider spread of F.D.I.?

How can we get developed countries to provide greater incentives to their investors to encourage them to invest in more developing countries?

What should we ourselves be doing?

Access to Technology

Access to technology on preferential terms is critical for developing countries. The developed countries have maintained that technology is in the private sector. This position is maintained in the outcome document. How can developing countries change this situation and increase their access?

Policy Space, Global Economic Governance and Systemic Issues

The outcome document reaffirms a) the commitment to broaden and strengthen participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making; and b) the commitment to governance, equity and transparency in the financial monetary and trading systems. How can positive movement be secured?

Sustainable Development, Energy

Sustainable development is a major part of what we are about and energy is vital to any process of development. Both issues have several dimensions.

I would like to solicit your views as to how, as developing countries, we can engage more purposefully, not only in the international discussions on these issues, but also in practical ways to advance our cooperation with a view to helping each other in this regard.