I am very honoured to be at the University of the West Indies. I am delighted to see so many young people here and linked in via video. I look forward to hearing from you.

Later today, I will sit down with CARICOM leaders. But in many ways, it is fitting that I meet with you first.

I know you may be worried about the economy, about the job market, about the future. I also know you are full of energy, ideas and solutions.

Reaching out to young people is one of my top priorities. We now have the largest generation of youth the world has ever known.

One-fifth of the Caribbean population is between the ages of 15 to 24.

You are not just leaders for tomorrow – you are torchbearers for today.

Our conversation comes at a critical time. The United Nations is celebrating its 70th anniversary. And the international community is gearing up to shape a new sustainable development agenda for the next generation.

We are calling the year 2015 a time for global action – and young people are crucial to building the world we want.

Let me just step back and put our work in context.

In the year 2000 – at the dawn of the new millennium – world leaders gathered at the United Nations and approved the Millennium Development Goals.

The MDGs were a global blueprint to cut poverty in half, expand education, fight disease, empower women and girls, take action on the environment.

The MDGs had a 15-year timeframe – a target date of 2015.

In the past decade and a half, we have achieved much. Global poverty has been cut by more than half. More girls are in school. We have made progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS and other killer diseases.

Here in the Caribbean, there have been similar successes.

But around the world, we have to do more.

Cutting poverty in half was never our ambition.

Usain Bolt does not stop at 50 metres.

We want to finish the race.

So now the international community is building on the success of the MDGs and finalizing a new agenda – what we call a post-2015 development agenda with a set of 17 sustainable
development goals.

Unlike the MDGs, these goals will apply to all countries – rich and poor.

The goals are meant to be people-centred and planet-sensitive.


Planet-sensitive means truly taking on the challenge of climate change – and living harmoniously with nature.

Our planet today has a fever.

When you have a high temperature, you have to go the doctor – you need to take medicine to bring the fever down.

The medicine for our planet is a low carbon economy. It is reducing greenhouse gas emissions to a level where we can keep the global temperature rise to below two degrees Celsius. It is renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Sustainable development and climate change are two sides of the same coin.

If we don’t address the planet’s fever, it will affect whole spectrum of life.

We have three priorities this year.

First, the adoption of the sustainable development agenda in New York in September.

Second, achieving a meaningful, universal climate change agreement in Paris in December.

Third, agreeing on a framework financing for development later this month in Addis Ababa.

Without financial and technological support, the sustainable development and climate mechanisms will be lofty words on paper – and nowhere else.

Dear students,

This agenda won’t happen on its own. It will take everyone – not only governments. The private sector. Civil society. Academia. And of course young people – all of you.

I ask three things of you.

First, raise your voices about the issues you care about. Get engaged. Challenge your leaders – your Presidents, Prime Ministers and legislators. Speak up.

Second, remember you are not just citizens of Barbados or the Caribbean. Look beyond your own country or region. Be a global citizen.

Third, have big dreams. I know you have passion. You may want to be President or Prime Minister – or maybe a doctor, a lawyer, a big business leader. That is good. Be as ambitious as you can.

Without passion, nothing happens.

But without compassion, the wrong things happen.

Act with passion and compassion – and you will help us build a better world for all.

Thank you once again for your invitation. I look forward to hearing from you.

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Statements on 3 July 2015

- Bridgetown, Barbados, 3 July 2015 - Secretary-General’s remarks at launch of UNAIDS and Lancet Commission Report: Defeating AIDS - Advancing Global Health