



Permanent Mission of St. Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations

**Recognizing the Achievements, Addressing the Challenges and Getting
Back on Track with the Millennium Development Goals by 2015**

Address by:

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Recognizing the Achievements, Addressing the Challenges and Getting Back on Track with the Millennium Development Goals by 2015

It is indeed an honor to address this august body on this very important topic, and must thank the President and the Secretary General, for the timely hosting of this debate.

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has set its own country specific targets which are directly related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and are fully committed to meeting them by the year 2015.

Eradicating Extreme Poverty (MDG1)

Poverty in St. Kitts and Nevis is associated more with very low wages than unemployment.

On the 30th July 2005, after a 350 year presence, the Sugar Industry was closed. This was due to unfavourable external developments, which led to its unprofitable performance.

It left behind a country with high levels of indebtedness, and many displaced persons. Sugar was all they knew. In an effort to deal with the first of the MDGs the Government partnered with the private sector and has established retraining programs, and is now making available land for agriculture for farming by small farmers.

In terms of meeting the first Millennium Development Goal we are on track but yet much more is yet to be done.

Universal Primary Education (MDG2)

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has ensured that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling. School meals are free at the primary level. Education is compulsory for all children up to the age of 16. The Literacy rate in the Federation is 98%. To that extent we have met the requirement of MDG2 .

However the Government has recognized that there is need to do more. In this age of sophisticated technology and computers, Literacy has to be redefine. There is a Green Paper presently being discussed which describes education development policies over the next ten (10) years.

Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women (MDG3)

On the issue of Gender Equality, St. Kitts and Nevis has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women in 1985. And through the Department of Gender Affairs have sought to ensure that women and men enjoy equal access to services offered by the Federation. Women in St. Kitts and Nevis enjoy equal access to education at all levels. We have experienced some progress in the professions, but meeting our targets in the area of political decision making, and the Boardrooms of companies remains a challenge.

There is need to address the economic, social and cultural barriers. For these we need help.

Reduce Child Mortality(MDG4) Improve Maternal Health(MDG5)and Combat HIV/AIDS etc(MDG6)

Child Mortality

Infant Mortality rates over the years have fluctuated, but in recent years we have seen some improvement. This is reflective of the ongoing expansion of the coverage and enhanced equality of care given to prenatal and perinatal patients at the primary health care level.

Maternal Health

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has a comprehensive maternal health program which caters to persons who access care at the hospitals and health centres. All births are delivered at hospitals there is no longer home deliveries. Maternal death in St. Kitts and Nevis is rear. In that regard we have met MDG5.

Combat HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS remains a threat. We are conscious of the devastation that it can have on those who contribute most to our economy. We continue to fight it and the stigmatization of people living with it. Apart from the social benefits that we gain by fighting the stigma, we believe we can better monitor and have more accurate figures.

National Strategic Plan

The Ministry of Health has prepared a National Strategic Plan for Health and Development which outlines our country's plan for health. It goes hand in hand with the Millennium Development Goals. We believe in a holistic approach to the issue of health and so these MDGs 4, 5, 6 are being addressed under the Health Plan along with other diseases, so as to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with Chronic Non-Communicable diseases.

The Plan addresses, prevention, treatment care for clients, support, advocacy, surveillance epidemiology and research, program coordination and management for HIV/Aids and sexually transmitted infections.

The Plan would be available to the public in the next week. We expect to begin seeing success by 2012, resulting in the population on a whole having adequate access to quality health care at an affordable cost, improved quality of life, and increased life expectancy.

Ensure Environmental Sustainability (MDG7)

Ensuring environmental sustainability, MDG 7, is a goal of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis. Our very survival depends on it. It is vital for keeping our tourism industry alive.

The sugar cane prevented disastrous erosion of the soil, and allowed the filtration of rainfall to the aquifers which supply potable water to 90% of the population. Climate change is an ever present danger. But in the country specific context of St Kitts and Nevis the achievement of this MDG has more to with what the Developed countries are doing than what we do. Therefore

the achievement of this MDG cannot be seen in the context of the nation. It must be a global one. While some things have been done, the evidence dictates that more has to be done

Develop a Global Partnership for Development (MDG8)

It is known that there is much benefit to be gained from global partnership. In an attempt to improve competitiveness in the global economy we joined the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) in 2006. This important stage of regional integration if we are allowed to operate on an even playing field it is hoped that it will generate opportunities for economic growth.

But our size will be for ever a challenge in terms of the economies of Scales.

CONCLUSION

The MDGs are incorporated among the goals that my Government has set for its people. It is not an easy road but we are taking it. We are continuing to invest in our people, in agriculture, in infrastructure and are partnering with the private sector. We are doing what has been asked of us but we need the help of others.

This is not a plea for charity or pity. But a request that those whose activities have caused damage to the Developing world, and who have set the terms of a world economic order in which we had no say, to recognize their moral obligation to provide adequately compensation to the Developing world.

I Thank You.