



ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Permanent Mission of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations

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Remarks

By

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In response to

**The Secretary-General's Remarks to the United Nations General
Assembly on the Outcome of the UN Climate Change Conference**

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New York

Adapted from Extempore Remarks

Thank you, Mr. President.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines aligns itself with the statement made by Sudan on behalf of the G77 and China. We would like to thank you, Mr. Secretary General, for coming promptly to us, for discussing the Copenhagen Conference of Parties, and for your own commitment to the issue of climate change. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also thanks the government and people of Denmark for their hospitality in hosting the Conference.

It seems, Mr. President, that having flown thousands of people thousands of miles to this Conference, we sought to achieve some level of carbon neutrality by producing an Accord on as few sheets of paper as possible. Mr. Secretary General, today you characterised the Accord as a “step towards a global agreement,” but it is only a step forward if it is measured against the possibility of an utter collapse of the Conference and no agreement at all. However, when measured against our own ambitions, our own expectations and indeed our own needs – particularly the needs of Small Island Developing States – we find the Accord to be profoundly disappointing.

The Accord is not legally binding, which, I assume, was an aim of most countries heading into Copenhagen. And there is no deadline in the Accord for the adoption of any such legally binding document.

The Accord refers to a limit of 2° [temperature rise above preindustrial levels], and there are a significant number of countries whose very existence is threatened by any rise above 1.5°.

Further, there is no reference to the continuing applicability of the Kyoto Protocol.

We also see a number of monetary pledges in the Accord – \$10 billion per year, and \$100 billion thereafter. These sums were proposed with regard to the comfort of developed countries’ economies, not to the actual needs of those most affected. We, the most affected, are very much accustomed to grand announcements and pronouncements of aid and assistance, which ultimately fail to materialise. We heard them in Monterrey, in Gleneagles, and most recently in London and Pittsburgh. But pledges such as these, which seem to come from everywhere and nowhere at the same time, are of very little comfort to countries that are being significantly affected by climate change as we speak.

Mr. Secretary General, we are also very concerned with the manner in which the negotiations took place. A small group of countries essentially took control of this process, and were given a mandate – I don’t know by whom – to carry this process forward. This pattern is a troubling development; and it was even seen here in New York in recent conferences on climate change.

What we had in Copenhagen was essentially a Group of 5 [countries] that produced a document on their own. That document was then endorsed by 25 “friends of the chair,” and subsequently foisted upon the remaining 160-odd countries of the world.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not in any way question the motivation of our friends who sought to break the deadlock – indeed, we applaud them. But we reject our own marginalisation at that critical point of decision.

This process, Mr. Secretary General, has placed you in the unenviable position of now trumpeting an accord to which all States have not agreed, as very eloquently explained by our brother from Bolivia.

This is a very troubling trend. It was exacerbated by the G20's self-proclaimed ownership of solutions to the financial crisis, and now, this new minority's undue influence on the solutions to what is truly a global problem. Indeed, many of the same countries seem to be in the driver's seat in both of these processes. This approach – which as our brother from Mauritius said, is now being tacitly endorsed by the *New York Times* – belies the fundamental concepts of sovereign equality and democracy that animate this body.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains committed to solutions on climate change and threatened by its impacts. We feel no less threatened today than we did when Copenhagen began. But we look towards Mexico, and we hope that the upcoming conference there will be marked by openness, inclusivity, transparency and legitimacy. We think that the credibility of the United Nations itself is going to be tested between now and the conclusion of the conference in Mexico next year. We must work hard, together, to determine whether or not this body truly is credible and relevant in modern times and to confront modern problems.

Thank you.