

October 6<sup>th</sup> 2023

## **OUR FOREIGN POLICY CONTINUES TO DELIVER**

### **Introduction**

A country's foreign policy should be crafted in such a way as to compliment the domestic policy, to achieve the national development ambitions of that country. It should not be an independent, arbitrary concept pulled from the sky, with ideas that do not mesh well with what the country is seeking to achieve as its overall objectives. Once properly crafted and effectively implemented, the foreign policy should offer many benefits to the country that would justify its existence garnering support by the citizens who reap the benefits. This is in no way suggesting that countries should engage in the type of foreign policy that is purely transactional, where support and cooperation is based on what is given in return, because this would be a dangerous practice. In situations like these, smaller, poorer countries with nothing to offer in return can find themselves ignored in the multilateral environment, or beholden to richer countries that have resources to trade for support. This is why, one of the fundamental tenets of any country's foreign policy (and more specifically in the case of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), is the principle(s) on which it is built and is guided by. In our case, our foreign policy is based on the adherence of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respect for sovereignty and independence and the non-interference in the domestic affairs of states. SVG believes in and promotes the peaceful settlement of disputes through mature diplomacy striving always to be friends of all as we work together towards the advancement of the global goals agreed to. This has enabled SVG to establish relations with countries of differing ideologies, yet still work with them effectively, bilaterally,

and multilaterally to advance many causes and bring major benefits to our nation, our region, our hemisphere and our world.

### SVG's Multilateral Leadership

Since 2016, the excellent work done by our government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our representatives posted overseas has reaped benefits and elevated SVG as a global thought leader and a nation with consistent and principled positions. Because of this, our country has been supported for a number of leading roles regionally and globally, gaining near unanimous support in almost every instance. During the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, SVG was elected as the chair of the Finance and Budgetary committee of the United Nations, with responsibility for leading negotiations on the budget of the entire organization that was agreed at US\$5.4 billion. Following the successful negotiations, SVG's Representative H.E Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, came in for high praises and commendations for the work done during the negotiating process. The years following saw SVG assuming the Vice Presidency of the Economic and Social Council in 2017 and then in 2018 being voted the president of ECOSOC, with responsibility of leading the charge in the advancement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These were quite remarkable for a small island like ours, but SVG was not done, as during this period, our country was also embarking on a campaign that started since 2010 to gain a seat on the United Nations Security Council, the highest decision-making body in the world. In 2019, in a history-making election, SVG became the smallest country to ever be elected to the UNSC, defeating El Salvador by a vote of 185-6, bringing to an end a very successful 10-year campaign driven by the mantra "friends of all, we strive for a better world" to an end. Currently, SVG is the Pro-Tempore President of the Community of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC), a position that was supported by states such as Mexico and Brazil, to lead negotiations with the EU and Africa in this resurgence phase of the

organization. If our country wasn't showing real leadership, none of these accomplishments could have been achieved.

### India-SVG Relationship Strengthened

This week we look at the diplomatic relationship between SVG and the Republic of India and how it continues to offer benefits to Vincentians. Both countries enjoy a cordial relationship since establishing diplomatic ties and Comrade Ralph leading his ULP government has since deepened the levels of cooperation between both countries. India contributed financially to SVG after Hurricane Tomas and the 2013 floods and has been a consistent friend of our country in times of disaster and need. The generosity of our friend was most evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, a period where developed countries exhibited a most shameful practice of vaccine nationalism, hoarding all available doses to first inoculate their populations before offering assistance to developing countries. It was during this time of their need that India donated 40,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines to aid SVG in its fight against the deadly Covid-19 virus, saving hundreds and possibly thousands of lives. India has also assisted the agricultural sector by provided an assistance of US 1.03 million to SVG in 2017 under UNIDO for modernization of Arrowroot Industry for climate change resilience and sustainable rural livelihoods for indigenous communities. Most recently, India has partnered with SVG in implementing 4 "Quick Impact Projects" in communities cross our State that will be used to improve the lives and livelihoods of residents. The construction of the Glenside recreational facility, that has a hardcourt and children playground; the renovation of the Port Elizabeth market in Bequia, the renovation of the Calder community centre and the renovation of the derelict fisheries complex in Chateaubelair converting it to a modern agro-processing and training facility, will have an immediate impact on those communities. It is no coincidence that the strengthening of the India-SVG relationship has occurred over the same period where

Comrade Ralph has developed a brotherhood with India's Prime Minister, H.E Narendra Modi. This one-on-one diplomacy practiced by our comrade has served SVG well as our country continues to make its mark internationally.

Our foreign policy is serving our nation well as it continues to deliver benefits for our people.