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PRESS RELEASE

**Prime Minister Gonsalves addresses the 74th United Nations
General Assembly**

On Friday 27th September 2019, Prime Minister Dr Hon Ralph Gonsalves delivered an address in his national capacity to the 74th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Following a number of Caribbean leaders who spoke before him, Dr Gonsalves addressed a number of issues that threaten the very existence, not just of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and this region, but Small Island Developing States specifically and member states of the United Nations more broadly.

Addressing the existential threat of climate change, Prime Minister Gonsalves spoke against the backdrop of the recent devastation wrought on the Bahamas by Hurricane Dorian, stating that the stories of destruction at United Nations meetings have become sickly familiar, with only a change in the names and locations of affected states. He strongly urged that the international community recognise that there is a case for Small Island exceptionalism that must be factored in juridically and non-discretionally in the architecture of global partnership, where the self-evident vulnerabilities of SIDS

should be of greater import than arbitrary and inaccurate measures of wealth currently being employed.

Dr Gonsalves, who thanked the members of General Assembly for reposing their confidence in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines by electing this country as the smallest country ever to serve as a non-permanent member on the United Nations Security Council, pledged to reflect the views of the majority of members in the need for the reforming of the Council. It was within this context that he decried the rising tide of hegemonic, unilateral, interventionist interference that threatens to inundate nation states. He spoke boldly against the clear and flagrant violations of international law in the externally enforced regime change sort after in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with the use of illegal and unlawful acts that threaten the lives of the Venezuelan people. Similarly, Prime Minister Gonsalves moaned the “death” of the Palestinian Peace Process primarily as a result of the usurpation of international law and the silent complicity with which the member states of the United Nations have acted. He called on the General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council to let their voices be heard unambiguously on these matters of global significance

Matters of national significance were also addressed as he informed the General Assembly that the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have a right to economic development and as such the government of this country must seek creative pathways to ensure that this development occurs. Prime Minister Gonsalves informed the GA of this country’s quest to build a modern medicinal cannabis indus-

try that intends to draw on the latest technologies that promote and highlight the pharmaceutical and medicinal values of the plant. He however warned that the thinly veiled war that's being waged against AIDS through the bullying of large countries and organisations including the European Union, that has only served to cripple previously thriving industries in our region, including offshore financial services and the threat of the withdrawal of corresponding banking relations, while at the same time pandering to more powerful states and states within their own region, must face staunch rejection from the General Assembly.

Following his address, Prime Minister Gonsalves was offered the customary congratulatory gestures by country's representatives in a sign of solidarity and friendship. The General Debate of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly is expected to come to an end this weekend with the final addresses taking place on Saturday evening. The Prime Minister's mission continues as he is expected to address Vincentians in the diaspora at a town hall meeting at the Friends Of Crown Heights educational centre from 6:00 pm Saturday 28, 2019.

September 28^h 2019