



**Caribbean Community**

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE TWENTY-THIRD INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM), 8-9 MARCH 2012, PARAMARIBO, SURINAME**

The Twenty-Third Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was held in Paramaribo, Suriname, from 8-9 March 2012. His Excellency, Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname, presided.

Other members of the Conference in attendance were: the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Honourable Winston Baldwin Spencer; the Prime Minister of Barbados, Honourable Freundel Stuart; the Prime Minister of Dominica, Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit; the President of the Republic of Guyana, His Excellency Donald Ramotar; the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Most Honourable Portia Simpson-Miller; the Premier of Montserrat, Honourable Reuben Meade; the Prime Minister of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, Rt. Hon. Dr. Denzil L. Douglas; the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Honourable Kenny D. Anthony; the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and The Grenadines, Dr. The Honourable Ralph E. Gonsalves; and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar.

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas was represented by Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Brent Symonette. Grenada was represented by the Minister of Works, Senator the Honourable Dennoth Modeste. Haiti was represented by Special Envoy (designate) to CARICOM Mr John Patrick Alexis.

Associate Members in attendance were Honourable Hubert Benjamin Hughes, the Chief Minister of Anguilla and Honourable Walter Lister, Member of Parliament of Bermuda.

Special Guest in attendance was His Excellency, Sebastian Piñera Echenique, President of the Republic of Chile

## **OPENING SESSION**

The Opening Session was addressed by the Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, His Excellency Desiré Delano Bouterse, President of the Republic of Suriname; Outgoing Chairman of the Conference, Rt. Hon. Dr. Denzil Douglas, and the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque.

The Secretary-General said this Inter-Sessional Meeting, should be remembered as the “initiator of this era of change.” He said the change would be taking place within an environment of reform within the Community, its Organs, Bodies and Institutions and take into account the way the Community’s affairs were governed and conducted. He said he recognised clearly that the change at the Secretariat must start and be led from the top.

Prime Minister Douglas said CARICOM, must continue to adapt and re-invent itself – “never in terms of our undergirding values, purpose, and principles, of course - but certainly in terms of how we function, how we operate, the extent to which we are, or are not, efficient, effective, relevant, with a sharper focus on being more results oriented.” He highlighted one of his achievements as Chairman as the on-going efforts to inject new vigour in the advancement of the process to set the region on a path of renewed focus.

The Chairman called for a new beginning which would only be possible if the Region undertook its task with renewed vigour. He said: “We must not only take account of our failures, but permit new energy to infuse our possibilities.” In reference to the review of the Secretariat presented to the Heads of Government at the meeting, he said the in-depth analysis of the institutions must lead to a better way of doing things.

President Bouterse said that the Community not only required a better and more empowered Secretariat, but also the political will of the elected officials, to further the integration agenda.

“CARICOM integration, the full realization of the Treaty of Chaguaramas must not be about paper -agreements and protocols-it must live,” he added.

His Excellency stated that: “We have no reason to be poor. Look at what we have amongst us: oil, gas, gold, diamonds, bauxite, forests, sea, sun, sugar, rice, spice, coffee, water, and so much more.” With such resources he said, “we can do more than survive. We can flourish.”

## **LAUNCH**

The Website for the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors (CYA) Corps in Suriname was launched at the opening of the Meeting and Heads of Government expressed their satisfaction at this achievement. The Regional Sports Academy was also launched during the Meeting. Heads of Government applauded Suriname on these two initiatives.

## **REFORM IN CARICOM**

Heads of Government received the Report on the Review of the Secretariat. The Report which they had commissioned in July 2010 in Montego Bay, Jamaica, was carried out by independent Consultants and supervised by a Project Management Team comprising representatives of Member States.

They considered in-depth, the recommendations of the Report as well as recommendations by the Community Council on that Report and agreed that the Report would be made public.

Heads of Government were of the firm view that the integration movement has continued to make great strides ever since the signing of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

Heads of Government agreed that the Secretary-General would begin the process of restructuring of the Secretariat through the recruitment of a change facilitator to support him

in that exercise and the strengthening of the corporate functions in the first instance. In a parallel exercise, the Bureau of Conference would work with an internal group from the Secretariat to facilitate improving regional governance and implementation. This process will involve the drawing up of the outline of a five-year strategic plan in time for consideration by Heads of Government at the Thirty-Third Meeting of the Conference in July.

## **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

### **Haiti**

Heads of Government noted the positive outcome of the visit of the Bureau of Conference to Haiti on 13 – 14 February 2012 which served to reaffirm the Community's support for and solidarity with that sister nation. They welcomed the fruitful discussions held with H.E. Michel Martelly, President of Haiti, his Cabinet Members and relevant stakeholders in Haiti. They further welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with regard to CARICOM's support for Haiti in the areas of institution building, capacity building, programmes for youth development and facilitation of travel for Haitian nationals. In this regard, they underscored the importance of the Special Representative and the CARICOM Representation Office in Haiti in continuing to provide support for Haiti through advocacy and capacity building as well as to assist in the implementation of the recently signed MOU. They reiterated their call for the international community to fulfil their pledges to finance the reconstruction of Haiti and looked forward to the early ratification of a new Prime Minister.

### **Grenada – EXIM Bank Dispute**

Heads of Government were briefed on the severe strain on the economy of Grenada in light of the unprecedented legal measures taken by the EXIM Bank of Taiwan for repayment of loans amounting to US\$28M. They were concerned that such action amounted to economic strangulation of Grenada and expressed solidarity with the Government of Grenada in these trying circumstances.

## **Anguilla**

Heads of Government discussed the situation in the CARICOM Associate Member of Anguilla and issued a statement which is attached.

## **Turks and Caicos Islands**

Heads of Government expressed their concern at the continued situation of non-representative government in the Associate Member of Turks and Caicos Islands. They noted the reports of progress in the achievement of some of the eight milestones established by the UK as pre-requisites for the holding of elections on the islands. They reiterated the critical importance of holding elections at the earliest possible opportunity in order to ensure the return to democratic and representative government in the TCI and to promote the best interests of the people of that country. They further underscored the importance of ensuring that the people of TCI are given the opportunity to express their individual voices on the process of constitutional reform currently underway, especially with regard to the composition of the electorate.

## **CRIME AND SECURITY**

Heads of Government received an update on the CARICOM Framework for the Management of Crime and Security. They discussed current trends in criminal activity, including the international dimension and new and emerging threats to security in the Region. They agreed that the security of the Region continued to be of high priority, especially in the context of the international criminal architecture confronting the Region.

Heads of Government also discussed the future Regional Crime and Security Agenda including, possible areas for extra-regional co-operation and initiatives for sustaining it. In this context, they received an interim report on the Consultancy to examine the institutions involved in

implementing the Regional Security Agenda. They agreed on the need for a closer working relationship among these institutions.

### **CLICO/BAICO**

Heads of Government had previously recognized the systemic risk to the regional financial system, and had deemed the financial collapse of the Colonial Life Insurance Company and its subsidiary British American Insurance Company, in the Eastern Caribbean as a regional problem which required a regional resolution. Accordingly, the Regional Technical Committee under the chairmanship of the President of the Caribbean Development Bank, which was set up by the Council for Finance and Planning, in early 2011 has submitted a slate of proposals to address this situation.

These proposals range from mechanisms to allow for the re-imburement of policyholders, sharing of the burden of this reimbursement among affected States to institutional arrangements to support the stability of the financial system particularly in the Eastern Caribbean. These proposals will shortly be considered for adoption by the Council for Finance and Planning with a view to providing early relief to the many policy-holders who have been adversely affected by this situation.

Heads of Government have requested the Central Bank Governors to provide an early report on the stability of the financial system in the Community, along with appropriate measures to enhance the regulation and monitoring of financial entities which operate cross-border.

### **CRICKET**

Heads of Government agreed to seek an urgent meeting between the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on Cricket and the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) before the end of March 2012

to try and resolve several issues. In this regard, they received a report presented by the Government of Guyana, with respect to the ongoing situation in that country

The mandate given to the sub-committee includes a mediation role in the on-going disputes between Mr Christopher Gayle and the WICB as well as issues related to the governance of cricket.

In the latter regard, the sub-Committee will review the state of implementation of the Patterson Report on Governance of West Indies Cricket in collaboration with the WICB.

Heads of Government were of the view that the recent statement by the WICB responding to the Prime Minister of Jamaica was insensitive, out of order and disappointing.

#### **CARICOM ENTERPRISES**

Heads of Government commended the Government of Suriname on its initiative to develop a regional commercial enterprise to assist with the funding of the Community's institutions. They agreed to support this initiative and endorsed the proposal for Suriname to undertake an initial feasibility study for the establishment of CARICOM Enterprises.

Heads of Government also agreed to the establishment of a Regional Task Force to examine the proposal in greater detail. In this regard, they further agreed that Suriname should serve as the Chair of the Task Force with Barbados, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, a representative of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and Trinidad and Tobago as members.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Climate Change**

Heads of Government approved the 'Implementation Plan for the Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change' which defines the Region's strategic approach for coping with climate change for the period 2011 – 2021;

They expressed appreciation for the support of International Development Partners with respect to the Implementation Plan and pledged to support the further efforts of the Climate Change Centre and the CARICOM Secretariat in the execution of the Plan.

### **Rio + 20**

Heads of Government acknowledged the significance of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development (Rio +20) scheduled for Brazil, 20 – 22 June, 2012.

In recognizing the importance and sensitivities of the issues relating to the "Green Economy Framework" and the institutional strengthening of the International Framework for Sustainable Development, the Heads of Government agreed that the special development challenges faced by the small vulnerable developing states like those in the Caribbean, should be fully acknowledged in the Rio + 20 outcome.

To address these and other related matters, Heads of Government endorsed the hosting of a special meeting of the COTED on Sustainable Development to finalise a common regional position on the issues before the Rio+20 Conference.



## **HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE ALLEYNE OCC**

Heads of Government agreed to nominate the Honourable Sir George Alleyne OCC as a Caribbean representative on the UN Secretary General's proposed High Level Panel (HLP) of Eminent Persons to advise him on practical measures to overcome the global development challenges hindering the achievement of the MDGs and other development objectives.

## **BORDER MATTERS**

### **Guyana-Venezuela**

Heads of Government took note of the continued growing relations between the Republic of Guyana and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. They expressed the hope that the existing friendly relations will aid the efforts towards a resolution of the controversy that emerged from the Venezuelan contention that the Arbitral Award of 1899, that definitively established the boundary with Guyana, is null and void.

Heads of Government reaffirmed their support for the maintenance of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Guyana.

### **Belize-Guatemala**

Heads of Government reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Belize

## **EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHILE**

Heads of Government welcomed the participation of His Excellency Sebastián Piñera Echenique, President of Chile at their Twenty-Third Inter-Sessional Meeting. They welcomed President Piñera's call for the strengthening and deepening of relations between CARICOM and

Chile through enhanced cooperation in a wide range of areas, as well as through the adoption of common positions in hemispheric and international arenas.

The President of Chile highlighted the shared feature of political and institutional stability in Latin America and the Caribbean in an era of democracy and economic growth. This, he said provided a unique opportunity, through education, to reduce poverty and collaborate in dealing with challenges such as global warming and climate change, organized crime, drug trafficking, terrorism and corruption.

Underscoring the importance of promoting cultural exchanges and people to people contacts between the two sides, Heads of Government reiterated an invitation to the Government of Chile to participate in CARIFESTA XI to be held in Suriname in 2013. They were pleased that this invitation was warmly accepted by Chile

The Heads of Government congratulated Chile on its assumption of the high responsibilities of President Pro Tempore of the Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC) as well as that of Chair of the European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean forum (EU-CELAC) for the period 2012-2013, and expressed the Community's full support for both processes.

They further expressed the Community's appreciation for the Government of Chile's willingness to advocate on behalf of CARICOM countries, at the upcoming G-20 Summit in Mexico, in June 2012 on issues of concern to small vulnerable economies. Included among these issues are the reform and restructuring of the international financial system, the strengthening of financial regulations, debt relief, combating commodity price volatility, addressing food and nutrition security and renewed access to concessionary financing for highly indebted middle income countries.

In thanking Chile for its active involvement in assisting the CARICOM Member State of Haiti, Heads of Government and State of CARICOM and of Chile reiterated their commitment to the continued support to that nation in its reconstruction and development efforts.

## **THE MALVINAS/FALKLANDS ISLANDS**

Heads of Government reiterated the importance of observing the provisions of United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 31/49.

Heads of Government also called on both parties to resume negotiations on all the relevant issues in order to find as soon as possible, a peaceful and definitive solution to the dispute, in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

## **APPRECIATION**

### **Deputy Secretary-General**

Heads of Government noted that the Deputy Secretary-General, Ambassador Lolita Applewhaite would complete her tenure at the CARICOM Secretariat in June 2012. They expressed sincere appreciation to Ambassador Applewhaite for her committed and distinguished service to the CARICOM Secretariat and the wider community. They expressed particular appreciation for her stewardship of the Secretariat in her capacity as Acting Secretary-General from January to August 2011.

### **Government and People of Suriname**

Heads of Government expressed their appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Suriname for the generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements put in place for the Meeting.

**DATE AND VENUE FOR THE THIRTY-THIRD REGULAR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE (July 2012)**

Heads of Government agreed to the dates of 4-6 July 2012 for the convening of its Thirty-Third Regular Meeting to be held in Saint Lucia under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Dr. the Honourable Kenny D. Anthony.



### **STATEMENT ON SITUATION IN ANGUILLA**

Heads of Government discussed with the Chief Minister of Anguilla, the prevailing situation in that CARICOM Associate Member where public tensions between the Governor and Chief Minister persist.

Heads of Government expressed their grave concern at the continuing deterioration in the governance arrangements in Anguilla and expressed the firm view that, at all times, the best interests of the people of Anguilla must be paramount, including due respect for the duly-elected government.

In this regard, Heads of Government called upon Anguilla's leaders to safeguard public confidence in political leadership through constructive and objective discourse and reiterated the Caribbean Community's readiness to contribute to an abatement of the ongoing tensions.

They accepted the invitation from the Chief Minister of Anguilla to send a delegation of Heads of Government to Anguilla at the earliest opportunity.