

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE  
TWENTY-FIRST INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF  
HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)  
11-12 MARCH 2010, ROSEAU, DOMINICA**

The Twenty-First Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was held in Roseau, Dominica, on 11-12 March 2010. The Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, presided.

Other Members of the Conference in attendance were: the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Honourable Winston B Spencer; the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, Rt. Hon Hubert Ingraham; the Prime Minister of Barbados, Honourable David J. H. Thompson; Prime Minister of Grenada, Honourable Tillman Thomas; the President of the Republic of Guyana, His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo; the President of Haiti, His Excellency René Garcia Préval; the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Honourable Bruce Golding; the Prime Minister of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, Honourable Dr. Denzil L. Douglas; the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Honourable Stephenson King.

Belize was represented by the Honourable Wilfred Elrington, Attorney General and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade; St. Vincent and the Grenadines was represented by the Honourable Douglas Slater, the Minister of Health and the Environment; Suriname was represented by the Honourable Clifford Marica, Minister of Trade Industry and Commerce; and Trinidad and Tobago was represented by the Honourable Paula Gopie-Scoon, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Associate Member in attendance was the Honourable Dr. Ewart Brown, Premier of Bermuda.

Special Guests in attendance were Mr. Robert Zoellick, President of the World Bank; His Excellency José Miguel Insulza, Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States (OAS); and Mr. Luis Alberto Moreno, President of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

## **HAITI**

Extensive discussions took place on the situation in Haiti with President Préval, the CARICOM Special Representative on Haiti, Most Honourable P. J. Patterson, as well as with the Presidents of the World Bank, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of American States and the Inter-American Development Bank.

In his interface with his colleagues, His Excellency René Préval President of Haiti made a presentation to the Conference on the historic context of the disaster, which befell his country on 12 January 2010. He underlined how the past helped to explain the present-day handicaps – weak institutional capacity, poverty - that contributed to the magnitude of the disaster.

The President also expressed the view that the international community needed to draw the proper lessons from this humanitarian crisis and called for the establishment by the United Nations of a civilian force that would respond to such crises. The Conference agreed to support this call.

In his vision of a new Haiti, the President placed emphasis on decentralization, the establishment of development poles provided with proper infrastructure and basic public services which could facilitate the creation of jobs as well as the redesigning of the devastated capital. He underscored the necessity for pledges for Haiti's reconstruction to be informed by the vision of the Government of Haiti.

The President advised the Conference that beyond the vision, pressing urgencies remained to be addressed – the provision of durable shelter in view of the approaching rainy season, the relocation of temporary camps from areas prone to flooding, assistance

in seeds and fertilizers to energize agricultural production, flood control measures, restarting schools in the affected and other areas, and strengthening Haiti's depleted institutional capacity.

Haiti's revenue flow had been decimated by some 80% by the disaster, hobbling the operations of the government. Consequently, Haiti's need for budgetary support by the international community and the international financial institutions had emerged as a most critical priority at the moment. This pressing matter was raised with the President of the Inter-American Development Bank who had been invited to the Inter-Sessional Meeting. He agreed that the matter needed to be addressed urgently. He joined with the Caribbean Community and the OAS Secretary-General on the importance of drawing the immediate attention of the international donor community to this critical concern. There was also agreement on the need to dispel the misconception that pledges made by international donors were tantamount to resources in hand though they had not been disbursed.

In the exchange of views that followed with regard to CARICOM's assistance to Haiti, The Conference commended Jamaica for the role it had played as the sub-regional focal point within the CDEMA framework in spearheading the Community's emergency response to the disaster by the dispatch of troops and medical personnel. Among other activities, they provided emergency medical services, distributed relief supplies and secured relief convoys.

The Conference also expressed appreciation for the Regional Security System (RSS) aircraft support which provided a logistical lifeline to the Community's operations as well as for the medical and other personnel from other Community Member States that worked alongside their Jamaican counterparts. Recognition was also made of the contributions of funds and supplies generated by individuals, civil society and corporate citizens in the Community's Member States.

With regard to continued assistance to Haiti, the Conference was guided by the pressing urgencies indicated by President Préval. In this regard, it was decided that the funds pledged by the Community for the third phase of CARICOM's health sector intervention would be contributed directly to the Government of Haiti as budgetary support to address these pressing needs. This gesture was also viewed as setting an example for the international community to follow.

The Conference also received a report from the Most Honourable Percival Patterson, the Community's Special Representative for Haiti.

### **THE SITUATION IN THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS**

The Conference noted with interest the recent development in the Turks and Caicos Islands of the two political parties, the Progressive National Party and the Peoples Democratic Movement, putting aside partisan differences to fight for the common good of the people of their territory. Their concerns relate to the system of direct rule put in place by the British Government which, as CARICOM had cautioned in earlier statements, has disenfranchised the Turks and Caicos Islanders who no longer have a voice in the shaping of the social, political, economic and constitutional destinies of their country. A return to democracy and self rule is required.

### **ECONOMIC SITUATION**

The Conference received the President of the World Bank and the President of the Inter-American Development Bank in a follow-up to discussions undertaken by Heads of Government with representatives of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in Istanbul, Turkey last November, in the margins of the IMF/World Bank Meeting.

The Conference engaged the President of the World Bank on four issues: assistance to Haiti; debt situation of CARICOM countries; financing Climate Change; and "Tax Havens".

The Conference and the President agreed that a special fund should be established where all resources identified for Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake should be placed and that the country should have immediate access to the resources.

The Conference emphasised that CARICOM should be included in all discussions on the reconstruction of Haiti in order to play the role of advocate as requested by the Government of Haiti.

The Conference also emphasised that the sovereignty of Haiti must be respected, the priorities of Haiti should guide the strategies and plans adopted and that these priorities had been indicated as including agriculture, infrastructure, governance and health.

The Conference stressed that the reconstruction of Haiti would require a long-term commitment of the international community and that strengthening the institutional and administrative capacity of Haiti must be a priority if the country is to play a lead role in its own reconstruction.

The Conference suggested that any financial assistance to Haiti should be grant aid and not loans, even if those loans were to be on concessionary terms.

The Conference welcomed the proposal of the World Bank to send teams of experts to the CARICOM Countries to devise amelioration strategies appropriate to the specific national debt situation and the Bank's willingness to lobby the International Development Association for exemptions to be made for access to that facility's resources for those Small Highly Indebted Middle Income Countries (HIMICs) of CARICOM.

The Conference also welcomed the World Bank's commitment to encourage other International Financial Institutions (IFI) to make CARICOM countries eligible for access to concessionary loans based on well known vulnerability and resilience factors,

since per capita income by itself is not an adequate indicator of a country's capacity for sustained development.

The Conference was informed that the Bank had established a US\$6 billion fund for Climate Change and that it was taking steps to leverage this sum. The Conference noted it would appreciate if the World Bank would help in gaining release of the proposed US\$30 billion that was earmarked for adaptation and mitigation on the part of developing countries, in addition to the promised US\$100 billion by 2020 that has been earmarked for the world as a whole. The World Bank was encouraged to ensure that countries would not have to go through a series of assessment studies in order to access the Copenhagen related funds.

The Conference accepted the offer of the Bank to assist CARICOM Countries in their negotiations of the required twelve (12) Tax Information Exchange Agreements (TIEAs) to fulfil the requirements of the OECD countries with respect to tax havens.

The Conference also accepted the offer of the Bank to act as an honest broker in CARICOM countries dealings with the OECD.

The discussions centred around access to resources for mitigating the crisis that continues to bedevil CARICOM's Highly Indebted Middle Income Countries (HIMIC).

### **Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)**

The Conference agreed to accept the recommendation of the President of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for a 200 percent increase in the general capital of the Bank.

### **CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME)**

The Conference received a Report from the Prime Minister of Barbados Hon. David Thompson and Lead Head of State for the CSME on Key Issues and Recommendations arising from an Appraisal of the State of Implementation of the CARICOM Single Market (CSM).

The Appraisal has confirmed that the operation of the Single Market has benefited on account of wide ranging political, legislative and related action which was taken by the Parliaments, the Executive and Ministries in all of the twelve participating Member States .

The Conference was pleased that the findings of the Appraisal were discussed at a Convocation on the CSME hosted and Chaired by the Prime Minister of Barbados in October 2009 and by the CARICOM Ministers who lead the Region's work in trade and development policy on the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) Convocation in February this year . Both fora which reviewed the Appraisal Report however, also established that there is still outstanding work to be done by individual Member States and by the Community in order to consolidate and to improve the functioning of the CSM.

In this regard, the Conference endorsed a detailed agenda for continued action on the Single Market which was worked out by the Trade and Development Ministers and charged each Member State with the task of offering timelines by which the programme of action could be implemented .The work involved would have to be completed in time for decision at the July 2010 Summit.

### **Climate Change**

The Conference focused on the issues involved in the follow-up to the Copenhagen Accord that resulted from the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 15), held in Copenhagen December 2009. It was agreed that CARICOM Member States will maintain their collective commitment to the Liliendaal Declaration, resulting from the Conference of Heads of Government held in Georgetown, Guyana, July 2009.

It was also agreed that in preparation for COP 16 in Mexico in December 2010 a Ministerial Meeting will be convened prior to the Conference of Heads of Government Conference in July 2010 to discuss the Region's position on a series of actions including

the enhanced action for adaptation, transfer of technology and the new financing window provided through the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund and Technology Mechanism.

### **Water**

The Conference was apprised that the persistence of severe drought and water scarcity in most countries of the Community was as a result of the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENCO) compounded by the intense sub tropical high pressure system over the North Atlantic and not the result of Climate Change. It was agreed that a joint COHSOD-COTED Meeting before the Conference of Heads of Government in July 2010 will provide a wide range of immediate, short, medium and long term measures on sustainable water management for the consideration of the Conference.

### **TOURISM**

The Conference confirmed its commitment to a Regional Marketing Campaign for Tourism. CARICOM Tourism Ministers are to determine the mode of funding for the Campaign.

### **United Kingdom Air Passenger Duty (APD)**

The Conference reiterated its concern about the deleterious effect of the Air Passenger Duty on tourism, the Community's most important economic sector, and its related service industries, and pointed out that the 'band' in which CARICOM Member States had been placed was unfair, discriminatory and placed them at a competitive disadvantage.

The Conference agreed to continue to pursue a satisfactory resolution of the matter.

### **Caribbean Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA)**

The Conference welcomed the launching of the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) on 18 March 2010 in Paramaribo, Suriname. The Conference

recognised that it was critical to advancing the thrust of agricultural development and to the facilitation of regional and international agricultural trade.

The Conference expressed confidence that the Agency would ensure the establishment of an effective and efficient Regional Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary regime, and would facilitate the harmonisation of the relevant laws and administrative practices as required by the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, and provide assistance to Member States in that regard.

### **Caribbean Public Health Authority (CARPHA)**

The Conference agreed to the establishment of CARPHA on a phased basis between 2010 and 2014. In so doing, it endorsed the merger of five regional health institutions—Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC), the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI), the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI), the Caribbean Health Research Centre (CHRC) and the Caribbean Research and Drug Treatment Laboratory (CRDTL)—into one public health agency with headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago. It acknowledged with gratitude, the support for CARPHA from a variety of sources including PAHO/WHO, the Public Health Authority of Canada, the UK Department for International Development and the US Centre for Disease Control.

### **CARIPASS**

The Conference welcomed the coming into force of the Agreement for the CARIPASS with the signature of the Agreement by five Member States.

The Conference hailed the introduction of the card as a major step in hassle free travel within the Community and looked forward to the operation of the first phase from 1 July 2010.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The Conference welcomed the establishment of the C@ribNet by the end of 2010. The Network will provide a high capacity telecommunications network among the

participating Members to support the delivery of low-cost bandwidth, to improve access for education and training, and to support access by Members to critical social services.

## **CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE**

The Conference noted that Haiti was designated to assume Chairmanship of the Conference as of 1 July 2010. Haiti acknowledged that it would not be able to discharge its duties given the effects of the catastrophic earthquake of 12 January.

The Conference accepted the offer of Jamaica to assume the Chairmanship for the six-month period commencing on 1 July 2010, instead of Haiti.

## **BORDER ISSUES**

### **Guyana/Venezuela Relations**

The Conference received an update on the controversy that arose from the Venezuelan contention that the Arbitral Award of 1899, that definitively delimited the territory between Guyana and Venezuela, is null and void. It noted the positive public statement made by His Excellency President Hugo Chavez eschewing conflict with Guyana regarding the controversy and reiterating Venezuela's commitment to the Good Offices Process of the United Nations Secretary General.

The Conference expressed satisfaction with the efforts being made by both States and the United Nations Secretary General to appoint a Special Representative of the Secretary-General to support him in his role to assist Guyana and Venezuela in the search for a means of settlement of the controversy.

The Conference reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the safeguarding of Guyana's territorial integrity and sovereignty and its right to develop its resources in the entirety of its territory.

## **Belize-Guatemala Relations**

The Conference received a report on the status of relations between Belize and Guatemala.

The Conference noted the delay in the conduct of the simultaneous national referenda on the referral of the Special Agreement to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) resulting from difficulties being experienced on the Guatemalan side and expressed the hope that these should be duly addressed.

In this context, the Conference called on the international community, particularly the "Group of Friends" to support the process both politically and financially.

The Conference emphasized the need to continue funding the operation of the Office of the Organisation of the American States (OAS), located in the Adjacency Zone that has successfully supported the both governments in maintaining peace and security and in reducing tensions along the border communities in both countries.

The Conference further noted the installation of the High Level Working Group recommended by the OAS Secretary General to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the confidence building measures in the Adjacency Zone.

The Conference congratulated the Republic of Guatemala for ratifying the Partial Scope Agreement on Trade between the countries, recognising its significance for the normalization of relations and called for the preservation and strengthening of the goodwill that has characterized the effort to find an amicable just and lasting solution to the territorial dispute.

The Conference reaffirmed their unequivocal support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Belize.

## **EXTERNAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS**

The Conference reviewed the outcome of the first round of negotiations with Canada for a Trade and Development Agreement. The Conference reiterated the Community's commitment to achieving a balanced and mutually beneficial Agreement that reflects the development aspirations of the Region and takes account of its vulnerabilities even as it grapples with the challenges arising from the ongoing economic and financial crisis.

The Conference welcomed the signature by Haiti of the CARIFORUM-EC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and the tabling by The Bahamas of its Services offer to the EC. The Conference acknowledged the designation of the CARIFORUM Coordinator under the EPA and urged that every effort be made to convene the first meeting of the CARIFORUM-EC Joint Council as soon as possible to facilitate the work of institutions established under the Agreement.

The Conference welcomed the establishment of the EPA Unit within the CARICOM Secretariat to assist CARIFORUM States to discharge their obligations under the Agreement and to take advantage of the opportunities it offers for increasing exports to the EC.

The Conference expressed appreciation to the United Kingdom Government for the contribution of Aid for Trade resources in the form of an initial grant of five million pounds to establish the CARTFund in the CDB which would assist with EPA implementation among other things.

The Conference noted that the market access concessions on Bananas and Rum, granted by the EC in Free Trade Agreements just concluded with Colombia and Peru, will pose serious challenges for CARIFORUM States in EC markets for these products. The Conference acknowledged the right of the EC to conclude free trade agreements with third countries but emphasized that this should not be at the expense of CARIFORUM countries.

The Conference expressed strong support for the initiative in the United States Senate to propose a Bill for extension of the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA), primarily to facilitate continued exports of apparel by Haiti to the US market. The Conference appreciated that the extension, if approved, would also apply to all eligible CARICOM countries.

The Conference agreed that the US trade agenda should be kept under close review taking into account the Community's engagement with the US Administration and Congress in the context of securing expansion of CBERA to include Services and the conclusion of a CARICOM-US Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA).

The Conference welcomed the work being done by the Community to select a project for funding under Aid for Trade resources.

The Conference looked forward to the Unit assisting CARIFORUM States to discharge their obligations under the Agreement and to take advantage of the opportunities it offers for increasing exports to the EC.

## **SUMMITS**

The Conference also noted the preparations underway for the two confirmed forthcoming Summits, the CARICOM-Brazil Summit and the Sixth European Union/Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC) Summit.

## **EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH OAS SECRETARY-GENERAL**

The Conference welcomed the Secretary-General of the OAS as he gave his thoughts on the future of the OAS were he to be re-elected to the post.

The Secretary-General assured the Conference that greater emphasis would be placed on human capacity building as well as on the issue of human security, an increasing concern for the Region. A better balance would be sought between the major priorities of the organization –democracy, human rights and development.

The Conference endorsed Secretary-General Insulza's candidature for a second term in keeping with the recommendation made by the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR).

### **APPRECIATION**

The Conference expressed their appreciation to the Government and people of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements put in place for the Meeting.

### **DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING**

The Conference agreed that the Thirtieth-First Regular Meeting of the Conference will be held in Jamaica.