

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FORTIETH REGULAR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY Gros Islet, Saint Lucia, 3-5 JULY 2019

The Fortieth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was held at Gros Islet, Saint Lucia 3-5, July 2019 under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Honourable Allen Chastanet.

Other Members of the Conference in attendance were: Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Honourable Gaston Browne; Prime Minister of The Bahamas, Honourable Dr. Hubert Minnis; Prime Minister of Barbados, Honourable Mia Mottley; Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell; President of Haiti, His Excellency Jovenel Moise; Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness; Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis, Dr the Honourable Timothy Harris; Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves; and Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley.

Belize was represented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Wilfred Elrington; Dominica was represented by the Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, the Honourable Francine Baron; Guyana was represented by Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Dr Karen Cummings ; Montserrat was represented by the Minister of Trade, the Honourable Claude Hogan; and Suriname was represented by the Vice President, His Excellency Michael Adhin.

Associate Members in attendance were: Bermuda represented by Premier, the Honourable David Burt; the British Virgin Islands represented by Premier, the Honourable Andrew Fahie; Cayman Islands represented Premier the Honourable Alden McLaughlin and the Turks and Caicos Islands, represented by Premier, the Honourable Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson.

Special Guests in attendance were the Prime Minister of Norway, the Honourable Erna Solberg, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency António Guterres.

OPENING CEREMONY

Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, His Excellency Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, immediate past Chair of the Community, Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis, Dr the Honourable Timothy Harris, and Chairman of the Community, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Honourable Allen Chastanet, addressed the Opening Ceremony. Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency António Guterres, made remarks.

The Chairman, the immediate past Chair and the Secretary-General stressed the need to complete the measures outlined in the Implementation Plan for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). They also emphasised the impact of climate change and the importance of Security co-operation. All speakers referred to the challenges facing small states. The UN Secretary-General in recognising the severity of those challenges, committed his organisation to taking the steps it could, to improve access for small states to development financing as a priority. He further declared that eligibility for Official Development Assistance should include vulnerability criteria.

The complete speeches can be accessed at <http://www.caricom.org>

AGREEMENTS SIGNED

- Amendment to the Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS) – Antigua and Barbuda
- Agreement on the Return or Sharing of Recovered Assets – Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Declaration of Intent to Provisionally Apply the Agreement on the Return or Sharing of Recovered Assets – Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Protocol on Public Procurement for the Caribbean Community – Antigua and Barbuda, Belize
- Declaration of Intent to Provisionally Apply the Protocol on Public Procurement for the Caribbean Community – Antigua and Barbuda, Belize
- Revised Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Examinations Council – Antigua and Barbuda
- Declaration of Intent to Provisionally Apply the Protocol on Contingent Rights – Belize, Haiti

- Declaration of Intent to Provisionally Apply the Multilateral Air Services Agreement –Antigua and Barbuda, Belize and Saint Lucia
- Protocol Amending the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to Incorporate the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) as an Organ of the Community and the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) as an Institution of the Community - Belize

SIGNATURE OF MoU

- MOU between the Caribbean Community and the Government of Jamaica on Support for Operationalising and Institutionalising the CARICOM RMB System Phase II.

RATIFICATIONS

- Deposit of Instrument of Ratification of the Multilateral Air Services Agreement – Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME)

Heads of Government expressed concern at the slow pace and low level of implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and at the lack of urgency exhibited by some Member States in enacting the necessary legislation and putting in place the administrative measures for implementation.

Heads of Government recognised that there were various capacity constraints and there was need to strengthen capacity at the national level to address the challenges, in particular that of the drafting of legislation; and agreed to provide greater support to the CSME Focal Points through the strengthening or establishment of CSME Units within the Ministries with a focus on implementation in accordance with the agreed timelines.

Heads of Government urged Member States participating in the CSME as a matter of priority to undertake the necessary action at the national level as agreed in the Implementation Plan,

acknowledging the importance of timely reporting on implementation action and challenges as well as of Public Education and outreach.

Heads of Government further agreed that agricultural workers and security guards should be facilitated administratively by December 2019 and implemented legislatively by July 2020. They mandated the COHSOD to expedite its work on the definition and qualification requirements in order for Member States to meet the stipulated timelines.

Heads of Government recalled that at their Special Meeting on the CSME last December, they had restructured the CARICOM Commission on the Economy (CCE). In that regard they welcomed the presentation of an Interim Report from the Chairman of the Committee, Professor Avinash Persaud, and accepted that the critical task ahead was to drive CARICOM States to stronger, more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and equitable development.

Heads of Government noted the Commission's view that any development model should be based on the Region's human capital. They also noted the Commission's plan to develop and refine implementable initiatives with respect to innovation, public sector reform, transportation and the improvement of access to the financial and economic systems.

Heads of Government also engaged with representatives of the private sector, labour and civil society. They welcomed the progress made by the private sector towards the establishment of a regional private sector body – "CARICOM Private Sector Organisation (CPSO)" - to be designated an Associate Institution of the Community which is expected to be finalised by the end of year. Its specific purpose would be to support fully the implementation of the CSME. Heads of Government endorsed the private sector's view that the CSME continued to be the most viable platform for supporting growth and development in the Region. Heads of Government agreed to designate the Caribbean Congress of Labour (CCL) as an Associate Institution of the Community and further welcomed its commitment to engage with the CPSO on the mechanism for its participation in that grouping.

BLACKLISTING

Heads of Government expressed their deep concern at the continued blacklisting of some of the Member States and Associate Members and viewed such action as a clear and direct threat to the economic well-being of those countries and the Region. They stressed that Member States had a sovereign right to determine their fiscal policy.

Heads of Government stated that it was unacceptable that compliance with the regulatory measures and standards for tax transparency set by the recognised global authority, was being disregarded by others who imposed arbitrary rules with respect to tax governance and anti-money laundering, without meaningful consultation with the affected States.

Heads of Government abhorred the continued inclusion of CARICOM Member States and Associate Members on the United States list of Major Money Laundering Jurisdictions which convey the erroneous perception of the Caribbean as high risk and so targeted for the de-risking strategies of global banks.

Heads of Government expressed the view that such behaviour undermined global rule-making and the relevant multilateral systems.

They emphasised the need for Member States to continue their vigilance in regard to the various processes underway in the European Union (EU) in order to protect their national interests.

Heads of Government refined the CARICOM Strategy on Blacklisting and will make greater efforts to secure a more collaborative relationship with the European Union and United States on tax governance and related matters.

SITUATION IN HAITI

Heads of Government agreed that a delegation comprising the Chairman and the Prime Ministers of The Bahamas and Jamaica and the Secretary-General would visit Haiti in order to inform the Community of the situation in that country.

SECURITY

Heads of Government in reviewing crime and security in the Region agreed to continue to strengthen the regional security architecture, both at the institutional and the personnel levels. They acknowledged the role of and the need to engage with international partners to this end.

INTEGRATING CARIBBEAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES

Heads of Government recognising the importance of science and technology to growth and development in the Region, welcomed the proposal to build a framework for an Integrated Caribbean Science, Technology and Innovation System for socio-economic development.

Heads of Government agreed to the establishment of a small committee led by the Prime Minister of Grenada to develop project proposals and spearhead resource mobilisation.

BORDER ISSUES

Belize-Guatemala

Heads of Government received an update on the most recent developments between Belize and Guatemala.

Heads of Government commended Belize on the successful holding of its referendum on 8 May 2019 in accordance with the Special Agreement to Submit Guatemala's Claim to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). They welcomed the fact that the case arising from Guatemala's claim is now before the ICJ for final and definitive resolution, in accordance with the Special Agreement

Heads of Government reiterated their concern that the undertaking by both countries and the Organisation of American States (OAS) to engage in the design and development of a mechanism of co-operation for the Sarstoon River remains outstanding and urged both countries and the OAS to reinvigorate their efforts to this end.

They expressed support for the crucial role of the OAS in the process aimed at resolving the dispute, arising from Guatemala's claims on Belize; and further called on the international community to continue supporting the OAS Office in the Adjacency Zone.

Heads of Government re-emphasised their unwavering support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of Belize.

Guyana-Venezuela

Heads of Government received an update on the most recent developments concerning the controversy between the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

They noted Guyana's request for the International Court of Justice to proceed to the oral hearings on Jurisdiction in light of Venezuela's failure to submit its Counter Memorial on April 18, 2019, in accordance with the time limit fixed by the Court.

Heads of Government expressed support for the judicial process underway which is intended to bring a peaceful and definitive end to the long-standing controversy between the two countries.

Heads of Government reiterated their firm and unswerving support for the maintenance and preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Guyana.

ENGAGEMENT WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

Heads of Government welcomed the Prime Minister of Norway, the Honourable Erna Solberg. They expressed their appreciation for Norway's leadership in addressing and supporting, issues of concern to the Community, such as concessional financing to build resilience, climate change, the environment and the sustainable ocean economy, as well as the issues of marine litter and pollution and the situation in Venezuela. In this latter regard, they expressed their support for the facilitation process being carried out by Norway.

Heads of Government applauded her establishment of the High-Level Panel on Building a Sustainable Ocean Economy on which the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, is a member.

Heads of Government also welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement that Norway would double its contribution to the Green Climate Fund.

Heads of Government also exchanged views on matters of mutual interest with Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett the Delegate of the United States Virgin Islands to the US House of Representatives.

SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

Heads of Government received an update on the situation in Venezuela and CARICOM's mediation-related activities, carried out by their High-Level Representatives.

They reiterated the importance of resolving the crisis peacefully through dialogue between the parties.

Heads of Government agreed that mediation-related activities would be continued to be pursued by the Prime Ministers (St Kitts and Nevis, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago) designated by Conference at its 30th Inter-sessional Meeting in February 2019.

Heads of Government expressed support for the facilitation process being carried out by Norway with both sides of the dispute.

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT AFRICA-BRAZIL-CARIBBEAN DIASPORA COMMISSION (ABCD COMMISSION)

Heads of Government received the proposal to establish an Africa-Brazil-Caribbean Diaspora Commission (ABCD Commission).

Heads of Government agreed to establish a Prime Ministerial sub-committee to explore the feasibility of establishing the Commission to be led by the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines and including the Prime Minister of Barbados and the President of Suriname.

They welcomed the offer of the University of the West Indies to support the work of the Committee.

UPCOMING SUMMITS AND MEETINGS INVOLVING HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

Heads of Government considered positions to be adopted at the United Nations (UN) High-Level Events during the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) from 23–27 September 2019.

Heads of Government were of the view that these High-Level sessions presented an opportunity to advocate for several issues of interest to Member States, particularly Climate Change, Financing for Development and Sustainable Development.

They noted that there would also be a High-Level Meeting to review progress made in addressing the priorities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including low-lying coastal states, through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

Heads of Government expressed the view that these High-Level Events served as a critical stocktaking point in the implementation of internationally agreed Frameworks or Instruments on Sustainable Development such as the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) and the SAMOA Pathway.

The Conference approved the Castries Call for Collective Commitment and Action on Sustainable Development, which highlighted the region's concerns and responses to the ongoing sustainable development challenges and signalled the Community's support for continued international cooperation and collaboration to address global climate change and the achievement of sustainable development.

The statement is attached to this Communique.

SUPPORT FOR THE ST. JOHN'S DECLARATION

Heads of Government welcomed the actions by twelve Member States to put in place full or partial bans on plastic bags, single-use plastics and styrofoam and the on-going efforts to implement a region-wide ban on styrofoam and select "single-use" plastics.

Further, Heads of Government agreed to endorse the St John's Declaration in support of the global anti-plastic campaign. The Declaration is attached.

SIDS RESILIENCE FOUNDATION

Heads of Government received a presentation introduced by Saint Lucia on the SIDS Resilience Foundation and Project Lodge, which is designed to mobilise financing to build resilience and agreed to consider further the request to participate.

Heads of Government welcomed the involvement of His Royal Highness the Duke of York in promoting this initiative which will be brought to the attention of the upcoming UN High-Level Meetings.

IV Ministerial of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA)

Heads of Government noted that in its capacity as Chair of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), Jamaica will host the IV Ministerial Meeting of the ECPA on 27-28, February 2020, under the theme: Energy Resilience and Investment Opportunities.

Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean

Heads of Government welcomed the information that Jamaica will host the Seventh Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas and the Caribbean, which will take place from 8th to 10th July 2020, given the importance of advancing national and regional efforts to galvanise disaster risk financing.

UNCTAD XV

Heads of Government agreed to support the bid of Barbados to host the XVth Session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in October 2020.

DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The Thirty-First Intersessional Meeting will be held in Barbados in 18-19 February 2020.

APPRECIATION

Heads of Government expressed their appreciation for the generous hospitality and excellent arrangements provided by Saint Lucia.

Fuente: <https://caricom.org/communications/view/communique-issued-at-the-conclusion-of-the-fortieth-regular-meeting-of-the-conference-of-heads-of-government-of-the-caribbean-community-gros-islet-saint-lucia-3-5-july-2019>