

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE THIRTY-NINTH  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF  
GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY**

**4-6 July 2018, Montego Bay, Jamaica**

The Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was held at Montego Bay, Jamaica, 4-6 July, 2018. The Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, chaired the proceedings.

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 Belize, Honourable Dean Barrow; Prime Minister of Dominica, Honourable Roosevelt Skerritt; Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell; President of Guyana, His Excellency David Granger (Brigadier Ret); President of Haiti, His Excellency Jovenel Moïse; Premier of Montserrat, Honourable Donaldson Romeo; Prime Minister of St Kitts and Nevis, Dr the Honourable Timothy Harris; Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, Honourable Allen Chastanet; Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves; President of Suriname, His Excellency Desire Bouterse; and Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley.

Associate Members in attendance were: Premier of Bermuda, Honourable David Burt; Premier of the British Virgin Islands, Honourable. Dr. Orlando Smith; Premier of the Cayman Islands, Honourable Aiden McLaughlin; Premier of the Turks and Caicos Islands, Honourable Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson

**OPENING CEREMONY**

The Opening Ceremony was addressed by the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Honourable Gaston Browne; Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. the Rt Honourable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Barbados, Honourable Mia Mottley, President of Haiti, His Excellency Jovenel Moïse and Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Chairman of the Community.

The statements addressed issues of critical importance to the Community including the advancing of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, the engagement of youth, crime and violence and security, disaster preparedness and resilience, evaluation of institutions and a renewed focus on partnering for development.

The full text of the statements are available at [www.caricom.org](http://www.caricom.org)

## **CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY**

Heads of Government reviewed the operation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and reiterated the need to accelerate its implementation. In that regard they adopted the Protocol on Contingent Rights which will cover the rights of persons moving to another country under the free movement of skills regime as well as their spouses and dependents of those who move to another country.

Heads of Government regarded this as a major historic step that would encourage greater use of the free movement of skills as it ensures levels of comfort for families.

Heads of Government also put greater focus on advancing those areas which would help to create enabling support measures for a competitive Single Market. These include an Investment Policy and Investment Code, an Incentives Regime, an Integrated Capital Market and beginning with model Securities Legislation. They mandated the Council for Finance and Planning (COFAP) to finalise these instruments over the course of the year and to be completed by July 2019.

Heads of Government adopted the Procedures on the Refusal of Entry of Community Nationals and the harmonised Form to be used by Immigration when refusing entry and urged Member States to implement the Procedures on the Refusal of Entry of Community Nationals by August 1, 2018.

In recognition of the need to keep focus on the CSME they agreed that a Special Meeting of the Conference on this matter would be held in November 2018 in Trinidad and Tobago.

They also agreed that the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on the CSME will meet quarterly to guide and invigorate the implementation process. The first such Meeting would be in September 2018. Emphasis at this time would be on what is practical and achievable over the next twelve (12) months.

Heads of Government welcomed the outcome of Consultations with Stakeholders including the private sector, labour, non-governmental organisations, youth and the media and agreed that a Stakeholder Consultation, led by the Lead Head of Government with responsibility for the CSME and/or the Secretary-General, be convened on at least an annual basis. In that regard, they urged Member States to establish consultative mechanisms at the national level.

## **REPORT OF THE COMMISSION TO REVIEW JAMAICA'S RELATIONS WITHIN THE CARICOM AND CARIFORUM FRAMEWORKS**

Heads of Government received the Report of the Commission to Review Jamaica's Relations within the CARICOM and CARIFORUM Frameworks and agreed that it would be taken into account in the work of the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on the CSME and at a Special Meeting of the Conference in November 2018.

### **BUILDING RESILIENCE: DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY STRATEGY FOR THE COMMUNITY**

Heads of Government reviewed the Region's disaster management and recovery programme. They recognised that the vulnerability of CARICOM Member States to natural hazards and the effects of climate change remain key challenges to sustainable development and that innovative approaches were required in the era of superstorms.

Heads of Government also recognised that the building of the Community's resilience involved the interaction of social, economic and environmental policies while enhancing physical infrastructure. They emphasised that Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) remains core to the achievement of a resilient Caribbean Community.

They noted that the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) had a key role in facilitating national governments to have full control of the Emergency Response and Early Recovery phases of a disaster and that sustainability of the Agency was therefore of vital importance, given its mandate and the range of post-disaster support Member States require.

They urged Member States to promote and maintain the Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) coordinated by (CDEMA) and encouraged the International Community to align its support with this mechanism including early recovery.

Heads of Government also urged the various Councils of the Community to give special consideration to regional sectoral programmes designed to build resilience with the intention of expediting implementation of recommended actions.

Heads of Government took note of the Regional Preparatory Meeting to the Mid-Term Review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (S.A.M.O.A. Pathway) to be held in Belize from 6-9 August, 2018.

They recalled that the Small Island and low-lying coastal Developing States (SIDS) Framework had its origin in the Barbados Programme of Action of 1994 further complemented by the

Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI) of 2005 and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway) of 2014. This places specific focus on the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS and provides the basic framework for international cooperation.

Heads of Government expressed concern at the slow pace of implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and agreed to work closely with the International Community in the 2019-2024 period to strengthen implementation.

Heads of Government expressed their appreciation for the contribution of Mr. Milo Pearson who has retired after serving 11 years as Chair of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIFSPC).

Heads of Government were also updated on preparations for the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 24) in Poland and encouraged participation at the highest level. In that regard, they issued a Declaration on Climate Change which is attached to this Communique. The Declaration provides guidance to Member States in their preparation for participation in COP 24.

## **SECURITY ISSUES**

Heads of Government received an update on current and emerging Crime and Security issues in the Region.

They mandated the Regional Security Agencies to work closely with National Security Heads to address the various challenges emphasising the need to strengthen the network of Security Heads in the Region to promote further information and intelligence sharing.

Heads of Government underlined the importance of enhancing the use of Information and Communications Technology in the fight against the illicit trafficking in narcotics and firearms, trans-border criminal activities and cyber-attacks. They expressed particular concern about the inflow of guns from outside the Region.

Heads of Government stressed the importance of working more closely with International Development Partners to assist the Region.

Member States were also encouraged to urgently update all legal instruments required to combat crime and enhance regional security.

## **REPORT OF THE MARIJUANA COMMISSION**

Heads of Government welcomed the Report of the Regional Commission on Marijuana. They noted its findings, conclusions and recommendations in particular with respect to human and religious rights; the social and developmental impact of use among adolescents; the economic benefits to be derived and issues related to its classification.

They expressed deep appreciation to the Commission's Chair, Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine and the other members of the Commission for their very comprehensive report. The Commissioners, representing a range of disciplines conducted region-wide consultations to inform the Report.

Heads of Government recognised that the current classification of marijuana as an illicit drug presented a challenge in the conduct of research to fully understand and ascertain the medicinal benefits to be derived.

They agreed that action should be taken at the national level by the relevant authorities to review marijuana's current status with a view to reclassification taking into account all international obligations.

They also expressed concern about the effect of marijuana use on young persons given the conclusive evidence that existed.

Heads of Government recognised that Member States would need to review the Report in more detail to determine action at the national level in relation to law reform models as proposed by the Commission.

Heads of Government expressed appreciation to the Foundation to Promote Open Society (FPOS) which provided resources for the work of the Commission.

## **NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Heads of Government noted that the Third United Nations (UN) High-Level Meeting (HLM3) on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) will be held on Thursday, 27 September 2018 at UN Headquarters, New York, USA, under the theme: ***Scaling up multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral responses to the prevention and control of NCDs in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development***. They agreed that Member States should be represented at the highest level at the Meeting.

They recalled that CARICOM led the world in 2007 in confronting the then emerging health priority of NCDs with the convening of the first ever Summit on the topic. Subsequently, CARICOM States succeeded in placing NCDs on the UN Development Agenda which led to the first UN High Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs in 2011.

Heads of Government endorsed six priorities on which the Region should advocate for during the negotiation of the Outcome Document. These are: establishing and maintaining a smoke-free status for the Region; implementing policies geared to preventing childhood obesity, including for health-promoting school environments and Front of Package (FOP) labelling; promoting the elimination of cancer of the cervix; support for mitigation of post-disaster vulnerabilities related to NCDs in particular: nutrition, treatment and care; increasing international financing and technical support; and strengthening accountability through national coordinating mechanisms.

They commended the contribution of civil society organisations to regional efforts to counter NCDs.

Heads of Government expressed gratitude to the Pan American Health Organisation and the World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) for the support provided to the CARICOM regional preparations for the HLM3.

### **CARICOM REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICS**

Heads of Government in recognising the strategic role of strengthening and improving the availability of statistics for evidence-based decision-making, endorsed the framework of a Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS).

They agreed to the development of a comprehensive Implementation Plan for the RSDS, a Resource Mobilisation Strategy, a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and a Communication and Advocacy Strategy and encouraged Member States and the CARICOM Secretariat to allocate the necessary human resource capacity at the national and regional levels, to adequately implement the Strategy.

Heads of Government expressed appreciation to the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) for its support to the Community.

### **EXTERNAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS**

Heads of Government received the report of the 24th Meeting of the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on External Negotiations. Issues discussed covered relevant regional and global developments, including those in the World Trade Organisation (WTO); future trade relations with the United Kingdom - post Brexit; and preparations for the African, Caribbean and the Pacific/ European Union - post Cotonou negotiations.

Cognisant of the importance of a strong multilateral trading system that places emphasis on development and special and differential treatment for small, vulnerable economies, they

reiterated the Community's support for an inclusive, rules-based and transparent multilateral trading system under the WTO.

Heads of Government expressed deep concern at the escalating trade tensions arising from the unilateral imposition of trade barriers by developed and developing countries and the resulting challenges to multilateral trade rules. They noted that the disruptive nature of trade wars among large trading countries has the potential to create instability in global markets, leading to a decline in world economic growth and adversely impacting developing countries in particular.

Heads of Government welcomed the progress made in the discussions between CARIFORUM States and the United Kingdom aimed at ensuring that there would be no interruption in preferential CARICOM/UK trade once the United Kingdom leaves the European Union.

Heads of Government also welcomed the adoption of the negotiating mandate of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group at the 107th Meeting of the ACP Council of Ministers held in May 2018 in preparation for the negotiations with the EU for a successor arrangement to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, scheduled to be launched by August, 2018. They reiterated that any new agreement should maintain the core geographic and geopolitical character of the ACP Group and that CARICOM would continue to remain actively involved in the negotiations.

## **BORDER ISSUES:**

### **➤ Belize-Guatemala Relations**

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

Heads of Government expressed concern that the undertaking by both countries and the Organization 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 noted with satisfaction that in accordance with the Special Agreement to Submit Guatemala's Claim to the International Court of Justice, Guatemala successfully held their referendum on 15 April 2018 to submit their claim on Belize to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a final resolution. They further noted that Belize was currently engaged in a nationwide public education campaign to prepare Belizeans to make an informed decision for its own referendum, scheduled to be held 10 April 2019.

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

➤ **Guyana-Venezuela Relations**

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

They noted that Guyana had filed its Application with the International Court of Justice on March 29, 2018, in accordance with the decision of the United Nations Secretary General, which was issued on January 30, 2018 to choose the International Court of Justice as the means that is now to be used for the settlement of the controversy between Guyana and Venezuela.

Heads of Government further noted that Venezuela had indicated its decision not to participate in the case and that in such a case, the rules of the Court provide for a full hearing of the case and a final judgement that is legally binding on both the participating and nonparticipating countries.

Heads of Government expressed support for the judicial process underway which was intended to bring a peaceful and definitive end to the long standing controversy and which was in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

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

**CONSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE OVERSEAS TERRITORIES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Heads of Government noted with great concern the amendment approved by the UK House of Commons to the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Bill requiring the UK Government to ensure that the British Overseas Territories, but not the Crown Dependencies, establish public registers of beneficial ownership information by no later than 31 December 2020.

They expressed their solidarity with the territories adversely affected by this unilateral action to legislate in areas of domestic policy constitutionally devolved to the territories without the consent and involvement of their people. Moreover, the action ran counter to an alternative arrangement to public registers earlier negotiated and agreed with the UK government and put in place at great cost to the overseas territories.



Heads of Government viewed this action as similar to the unilateral and punitive extra-territorial measures such as blacklisting and de-risking taken against their own countries financial services sector, also a critical aspect of their economies, despite their best efforts at transparency and compliance.

## **EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH SPECIAL GUESTS**

### **CUBA**

Heads of Government welcomed His Excellency Miguel Diaz-Canel, President of Cuba and acknowledged the continued strength of the fraternal relations between CARICOM and Cuba based on solidarity, mutual support and technical cooperation.

They underlined the need to increase trade and economic relations and, in this regard, noted the proposal of Cuba to appoint working teams to identify commercial opportunities.

Heads of Government also underlined the importance of increasing bilingualism among the youth of both parties.

CARICOM and Cuba highlighted the need for a united Caribbean to exercise its control over the Caribbean Sea through conservation and exploitation of its economic opportunities.

Heads of Government reiterated their call for an end to the unjust financial and economic embargo against Cuba and expressed concern over the reversal of measures taken to improve the relationship between Cuba and the United States of America

### **CHILE**

Heads of Government also welcomed His Excellency Sebastian Pinera, President of Chile and reaffirmed the Community's commitment to strengthening relations and technical cooperation links with longstanding partner Chile. They also viewed the visit as an opportunity to explore the possibilities for further political dialogue and meaningful co-operation between CARICOM and Chile.

Heads of Government welcomed the proposal by Chile of five areas for collaboration. These included: a multidimensional approach to poverty; search and rescue missions in urban areas; environment and climate change; natural disasters including infrastructure restoration; a proposed Free Trade Agreement with the Community; as well as Chile's intention to make resources available through the Capital Fund of the OAS.

Heads of Government expressed an interest in furthering collaboration in the areas of food security, the Blue Economy/Oceans, and trade promotion.

Both sides agreed to the convening of the CARICOM-Chile Joint Commission in order to concretise cooperation going forward and in this regard noted the willingness of Barbados to host such a meeting.

### **LEGAL INSTRUMENTS SIGNED**

#### **Multilateral Air Services Agreement**

Suriname

#### **CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty**

Jamaica

#### **Revised Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC)**

Jamaica

#### **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**

Jamaica

### **PROTOCOL ON CONTINGENT RIGHTS**

Barbados

Grenada

Haiti

Jamaica

Saint Lucia

St Vincent and the Grenadines

Suriname

**DATE OF THE THIRTIETH INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE (FEBRUARY 2019, ST. KITTS AND NEVIS)**

According to the Rotation Schedule for the Chairmanship of the Conference of Heads of Government, the Thirtieth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference will be held in St. Kitts and Nevis on 26-27 February 2019, under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis.

**APPRECIATION**

Heads of Government expressed their appreciation for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements provided by the Government and people of Jamaica.

**DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

Securing the future of our people

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), at our Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM on 4 - 6 July 2018 in Montego Bay, Jamaica,

Recalling the CARICOM Declaration for Climate Action made at the Thirty-Sixth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in July 2015,

Recalling the objectives, principles and commitments of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Convention), the Kyoto Protocol, the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement,

Recalling further the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) and its goals,

Reaffirming that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remain a special case for environment and development, considering their unique and particular vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change, as acknowledged in the Convention, the Paris Agreement and by the international community in multiple international fora,

Noting with grave concern that our people are already confronting the negative effects of climate change, including extreme weather events such as hurricanes, especially Irma and Maria, drought; and, in some cases, our ecosystems are approaching the limits of their adaptive capacities,

Recalling with appreciation the humanitarian support provided to CARICOM countries affected by hurricanes and tropical storms in 2017 and the financial commitments made at the CARICOM-UN High-Level Pledging Conference on 21 November 2017 to support their rebuilding efforts,

Alarmed that the Region's ability to achieve sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda will be severely compromised by the failure of the international community to take ambitious climate action to hold the increase in global average temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels (1.5°C ),

Underscoring thus the imperative to close the gap between the aggregate effect of mitigation targets in nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and the level of effort required to limit the increase in global average temperature to 1.5°C and reiterating further the equally urgent need to enhance the Region's capacity to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and to address permanent loss and damage,

Enhanced global cooperation for urgent and ambitious climate action

Resolute in our commitment to urgent and ambitious action on climate change in order to secure the future of our people,

Now therefore, we, the Heads of State and Government:

Call for a global effort to close the mitigation ambition gap and place the world on pathways for low emissions climate resilient development;

Urge the international community to continue to support the Caribbean in its ongoing efforts to contribute to global efforts to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and to adapt to the impacts of climate change and build the Region's resilience;

Emphasize the critical importance of pre-2020 climate action;

Further emphasize the centrality of the Paris Agreement for progressively ambitious climate action and urge universal participation in its implementation;

Commit to accelerate efforts regionally in order that all CARICOM Member States have undertaken the necessary action to ratify the Paris Agreement at the latest by the Conference of Parties to be held in Poland in December 2018 (COP 24);

Towards a successful COP 24

Reflecting upon the specific needs and circumstances of our countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, we:

Commend the Fiji Presidency for its stewardship of the Twenty-Third Conference of the Parties (COP 23), its commitment to focus international attention on the plight of Small Island and Low-Lying Coastal Developing States (SIDS) and the continued preparatory work for COP 24, including the Talanoa Dialogue and the finalization of the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP);

Encourage Poland in its capacity as the incoming Presidency of COP 24 to maintain international attention on the small island and low-lying coastal developing states and confirm CARICOM's full support for a successful and ambitious Climate Change Conference;

Look forward to the release in early October of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C and a dedicated space to discuss the implications of the Report prior to COP to better inform the Talanoa Dialogue;

Commit to full participation in the Talanoa Dialogue process, at the national and regional levels, and to the highest level participation in the global process at COP 24, so as to catalyze the necessary political momentum for more ambitious climate action compatible with the 1.5°C temperature limit including through the communication of new and updated NDCs in advance of 2020;

Call for urgent steps to ensure progress in the completion of a holistic and effective Paris Agreement Work Programme by COP 24 that will establish a robust foundation and support all parties in the implementation of their obligations under the Agreement;

Emphasize that loss and damage is an integral pillar of the Paris Agreement and calls for the provision of adequate support to initiatives under the Warsaw International Mechanism (WIM) for Loss and Damage as well as support to enable countries to submit loss and damage proposals to the Green Climate Fund (GCF);

Call on all countries, both developing and developed, to participate actively and meaningfully in discussions to address Loss and Damage, including in the context of the Suva Expert Dialogue on Loss and Damage;

Urge the international community to support the CARICOM in its drive to recapitalize the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) as the premiere mechanism that presently addresses loss and damage, in the face of more intense extreme weather events exacerbated by climate change;

Recall the commitment of developed countries to jointly mobilize by 2020 through to 2025, USD100 billion per annum, and urge the announcement, during the High-level Ministerial Dialogue on Climate Finance, of demonstrable efforts to further advance towards meeting the 100 billion goal, while aiming to achieve a balance in the provision of resources for mitigation and adaptation actions and targeting the needs of SIDS for public and grant-based resources for adaptation;

Acknowledge the importance of the availability of a wide variety of sources, instruments and channels for scaling up climate finance and urge the finalization at COP 24 of the necessary decisions to have the Adaptation Fund serve the Paris Agreement;

Also urge the launch of an inclusive process for the first formal replenishment process of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the development of a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy informed by the latest science and the urgent needs especially of the Small Island and Low-Lying Coastal Developing States;

Commit to effectively participate in the negotiation process through to COP 24, in order to advance the region's priorities and to support and supplement positions taken by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS); and

Urge the international community to ensure that the outcomes of COP 24 result in the full and effective operationalisation of the Paris Agreement.