



Future of CARICOM and Regional Integration



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2012 MUST BE 'YEAR OF CHANGE' — PRESIDENT BOUTERSE

*New Year's Message from His
Excellency Desiré Delano Bouterse,
President of the Republic of
Suriname and Chairman of the
Caribbean Community,*



People of the Caribbean Community,

I wish you all a happy, healthy and productive New Year. As Chairman of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of CARICOM, I look forward to a year that holds great opportunities for strengthening our integration movement, and thereby improving the lives of our citizens.

While the 1st of January is an important day for me, it is even more so for His Excellency, President Michel Martelly, and the people of the Republic of Haiti, who celebrate their independence on this day. I wish to offer them my heartiest congratulations on the completion of yet another auspicious milestone. I am delighted that we are witnessing the active participation of Haiti within the Caribbean Community, as proof of the resilience and fortitude of its people to rebound from the adversity of the disastrous earthquake of 2010.

I also wish to congratulate the People and Government of Jamaica for the peaceful manner in which the recent elections have been conducted.

Once again, the Jamaican people have demonstrated that the democratic traditions and institutions within our Community are strong and vibrant.

I furthermore extend my congratulations to the People's

National Party and its Chairman on their victory and my best wishes and full support to the Most Honourable Portia Simpson-Miller as the Prime Minister-designate of Jamaica.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank my predecessor, the Right Honourable Dr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, for the outstanding leadership and stewardship which he portrayed in this office during the last six months. I can say with confidence that I benefitted as well, from the wisdom and guidance of Prime Minister Douglas and Prime Minister Tillman Thomas of Grenada, as the baton of the Chairmanship of the Conference passes to me.

I take the helm at a time of uncertainty throughout the world, with our Region being no exception. The global economic and financial crisis shows no signs of abating, with the resulting challenges of unemployment, low or negative growth and increasing disparity between the rich and the poor. Given the relationship between the economic health of the major nations and its effect on us in CARICOM, it would require a major effort on our part to overcome the challenges presented by this on-going situation. It also requires that we take a hard look at the way we operate, and accept changes that may be necessary.

We have before us an opportunity to bind ourselves even closer together. For, surely, we stand a better chance to confront these challenges as a group united, than each swimming alone against the tide.

We have made a positive start in that direction when last May, at the Retreat, the Heads of Government identified areas that will strengthen our integration movement and thus deserve our prime attention. The determination to consolidate our CARICOM Single Market and Economy is a key factor in this regard and is also a strategic element in our efforts to confront the external challenges.

At the Retreat, we also determined that the manner in which these priorities would be addressed must ensure that the people of the Community feel the impact and recognize the benefits that come to them from integration. In 2012, we will increase our focus and attention on these areas, and on ways the population can more readily feel the benefits.

As Chairman of CARICOM, I will place emphasis on enhancing awareness of the efforts being undertaken by the Secretariat and other institutions to improve the lives of our citizens.

To accomplish their tasks, they must operate as efficiently and effectively as possible, particularly given the impact that the continuing global crisis has on our Member States.

In that regard, the review of the Secretariat must be completed and the relevant recommendations implemented to improve its management and operation, as it is the principal organ that serves our Community. The completion of that review could not be better timed, given the appointment in August last year, of our new Secretary-General, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque. My colleagues and I have every confidence in his ability to be the change agent who leads from the front, in effecting the necessary repositioning of the Secretariat.

This secretariat is just the first in the review process, as all the institutions that serve and are funded by the people of our Community will also be reviewed during the course of the year.

People of the Community,

You may know that, as President of the Republic of Suriname, I have lead responsibility in CARICOM for Community Development, which includes the areas of Culture, Youth,

Sport and Gender. Although the responsibilities for the six months of my chairmanship will be broader, I will naturally focus on these.

In this regard, one of the main areas I will be paying attention to will be the involvement of our Youth. The Paramaribo Declaration of 2010 laid out ideas and recommendations for greater youth involvement in the affairs of the Community. These must be pursued urgently and diligently, as the participation of the young people in the integration movement is essential to ensure that it is kept alive and dynamic.

Looking outward, I will also seek to improve the coordination among the various regional blocs to which our Member States belong – in particular those in our neighborhood. We must aim to strengthen our position in these organizations and groupings, and make the best of the opportunities they present. Through working more closely together, we can improve the standard of living of our citizens.

People of CARICOM,

This year, 2012, must be the Year of Change. By altering the way we do things, this Community will be an improved one by the end of 2012. I am hopeful that indications of this effect will come as early as March of this year, out of the discussions at the Twenty-Third Inter-Sessional Meeting, to which I expect to welcome all my colleague CARICOM Heads of State and Government, here in Suriname.

Let us all resolve to be instruments of that movement, and be involved in changing our Community, so that this year could really be remembered as The Year of Change.

May I, once again, wish you all a Happy and Productive 2012.

EDITORIAL



It's that time again, when we bid adieu to yesteryear and bienvenue to a new one; a time of reflection and introspection, of planning and expectation for a brighter tomorrow.

For those of us in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), 2011 will be remembered as an eventful year. It marked the historic changing of the guard, the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the integration movement, with the installation of new Secretary-General Amb. Irwin LaRocque. The new Secretary-General succeeded Sir Edwin Carrington who demitted office in December 2010 after 18 years at the helm of the CARICOM Secretariat. Amb LaRocque, no stranger to the Community having served previously as Assistant Secretary-General, Trade and Economic Integration, and in various other capacities on behalf of Dominica, from which he hails, is credited with being one of the Region's leading trade experts, with a keen understanding of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) – the flagship initiative of the integration movement.

Under no illusions about the task before him, Amb LaRocque assumed the position at critical juncture in both the Regional movement and the international environment. In his acceptance speech on 15 August, he pledged to fuel the hope in the integration movement that was so evident in the many congratulatory messages, formal and informal, that he had received.

In the following pages, we provide snapshots of the Secretary-General's first four months in office, in which he set a hectic pace, paying official visits to Member States, actively participating in key regional engagements and undertaking several overseas missions including to Central America, the US, Brussels, Australia and Trinidad and Tobago.

One of the overseas missions Secretary-General LaRocque headed during the past four months was to the United Nations High Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in New York. The Community lobbied earnestly to have such a forum held as part of efforts to bring global awareness to the effects of NCDs. The Secretary-General also led missions to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, and to the CARICOM-Cuba Summit in Port-of-Spain.

2011 was also the year when The Right Honourable Sir Charles Michael Dennis Byron succeeded the Right Honourable Mr. Justice Michael De La Bastide as President of the Caribbean Court of Justice. A former judge of the United Nations International Criminal Court (ICC) for Rwanda from June 2004, Sir Dennis, a Kittitian, was elected President of the Tribunal in May 2007 and was re-elected for a second term in May 2009. Focus in this edition is placed on the work of the CCJ and its critical role in the functioning of the CSME.

During the latter quarter of 2011, four new Heads of Government took office in the CARICOM family of nations. The Hon Dr. Orlando Smith was elected premier of the British Virgin Islands, while the Hon Andrew Holness became the youngest Head of Government of Jamaica after the Hon Bruce Golding tendered his resignation as Prime Minister. Saint Lucia and Guyana also elected new Heads of State, Dr. the Hon Kenny Anthony and His Excellency Donald Ramotar, respectively.

As the magazine was going to bed, Jamaica announced 29 December as the date for its general elections. A new government is therefore expected to be in place in Jamaica by the dawn of 2012.

We take this opportunity to extend congratulations and best wishes to the new Heads of Government.

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PLEDGE TO WORK TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION

*Following is a
Christmas Message
by the Prime Minister of St. Kitts
and Nevis and Chairman of The
Conference of Heads of Government
of the Caribbean Community
(CARICOM),
Rt. Hon. Dr. Denzil Douglas*



As outgoing Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Government, it gives me great pleasure to wish the people of the Caribbean Community a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

During our celebration of this season of goodwill, let us, as a Community, reflect on our achievements over the year that is fast ending, a reflection that will no doubt be coloured by the challenges spawned by the current period of global uncertainties.

Those external upheavals have served to strengthen our resolve to drive the integration movement forward, a stance for which there has been firm support and commitment from you, the regional populace. I wish to reiterate my commendation to you for your resilience and for the outstanding qualities that have enabled our Community to remain a symbol of stability and good governance, reflected in our embrace of democratic processes.

The challenges, including those directly related to the global

economic and financial crises have honed our attention particularly on finding creative ways to confront them. We have sought, for example, to encourage foreign investment from new areas and welcomed the interest shown by India, China and Japan, all of whom mounted trade and investment missions to the Region seeking opportunities.

The continuing increases in the prices of food and the search for food sovereignty have engaged our attention as a Community. Our stakeholders in the agriculture sector, as evinced most recently in Dominica where they participated in the Caribbean Week of Agriculture, are working assiduously to find a solution to those particular challenges. We must continue to encourage them by buying and consuming locally grown food - which we are by no means short of - so that we could lower our very high food import bill, and at the same time, maintain healthy lifestyles.

In advancing the latter ideal, our Community can take pride in the fact that we provided the leadership to appropriately position on the international stage, the threat of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). As a result of the Community's tireless advocacy, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly agreed to convene a High Level Meeting (HLM) on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) which was held in September in New York, although the outcome may not have been as ambitious as we had envisaged.

Regionally, we have made great strides in initiating operations of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), a consolidation of five regional health institutions. The Agency, I am pleased to announce, will come on stream early in the New Year.

Our solid achievements in health have extended also to successes recorded by the Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP).



People of the Community, securing your livelihood and well-being have been at the forefront of our activities; however, given their importance to our Community, we have placed much emphasis on youth development. In the last quarter of this year, we boosted our campaign against youth gangs and gang violence with interventions across the Region that have yielded encouraging results and which will determine our response going forward.

A major factor in ensuring that well-being and indeed our existence is our commitment to the adaptation and mitigation of Climate Change. Earlier this month, at the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, we continued our advocacy for attention to be paid to the deleterious effects of climate change on the natural environments and economies of our small states. One of the outcomes of the Durban Conference was a decision by Parties to adopt a universal legal agreement on climate change as soon as possible, and no later than 2015. The Community, in particular, through Grenada's leadership of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), ensured that a number of our concerns was addressed in the outcome document.

We continued our quest to cement relations with Third States and Groups of States with some emphasis on those in our Hemisphere. A plan of action for closer co-operation and joint initiatives was drawn up with the Integration System of Central America (SICA) in a range of areas and work has begun through the two regional Secretariats to ensure that these initiatives make an impact on the lives of the people of both Regions. I was particularly pleased to participate in the Fourth CARICOM-Cuba Summit held in Trinidad and Tobago earlier in December, where the Community renewed and advanced its longstanding relationship with Cuba. There are also meaningful people-centered activities arising out of that encounter in health, agriculture, infrastructure building and culture, which would doubtlessly improve the well-being of our citizens.

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take pride in the fact that
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Non-Communicable Diseases*

As we look back on 2011, we can do so with a measure of comfort that we have fulfilled the charge delivered at the beginning of the year by my predecessor, the Hon. Tillman Thomas, Prime Minister of Grenada, to make 2011 a "watershed year", a year when a new generation of leaders would take their place in the Community. At that time, we were confident that we would weather the multiple storms that were facing us by dint of strengthening community bonds, cooperating with each other and utilising all the skills available to us.

In our era of new beginnings, one of my first tasks as Chairman of the Community was to install Ambassador Irwin LaRocque as the new Secretary-General of CARICOM, an occasion which, for me, heralded a turning point in the history of our Community. He has begun the task of finding creative ways to chart the Community's course in the current global environment.

As we contemplate our resolutions for the new year, let us collectively pledge to work together to build on our founding fathers' dreams of regional integration, securing a community for all for generations to come.

Season's greetings to you all!

“I CANNOT DO IT ALONE; THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY MUST MAKE THIS JOURNEY WITH ME”

*Speech delivered by Ambassador
Irwin LaRocque,
Secretary-General
Caribbean Community
(CARICOM)
on His Assumption of
The Office of Secretary-General
15 August, 2011*



Today, I begin my task as the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community with a mix of excitement and awe given the challenges of the moment.

I wish at the outset, to express my appreciation to you, Mr. Chairman, and your colleague Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community for the confidence reposed in me as Secretary-General of our Community.

I take particular note of the charge you have given me, Mr. Chairman.

I also want to pay tribute to Ambassador Lolita Applewhaite, who for the past seven and a half months has acted as Secretary-

General and fulfilled her responsibilities with great skill and fortitude at a difficult time in the life of the Community and its Secretariat. It would also be remiss of me were I not to recognize the tremendous contribution of my predecessor, Sir Edwin Carrington, to the building of this Community. Under his watch much has been achieved in advancing the architecture of our integration.

I am also grateful for the many congratulatory messages and warm expressions of goodwill I have received since my selection on the 21st of July. That those wishes came not only from across the Region, but also from far distant shores, testifies to the reach and significance of our Caribbean Community.

In addition to the formal congratulatory messages, I received numerous e-mails, phone calls and text messages, some from persons whom I do not know, but who wanted to be part of the moment; a moment which does not belong to me but to the entire Community. In airports across the Region and further afield, strangers walked up to me and expressed their views about the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME); about the movement of people in our Community, the treatment meted out to them at points of entry and the perceived difficulty of travelling throughout our Region;

Ambassador LaRocque's speech continues next page

ABOUT AMBASSADOR IRWIN LAROCQUE

AMBASSADOR Irwin LaRocque, a national of Dominica, assumed the office of Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on 15 August 2011, following his selection by the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM on 21 July 2011.

He is the seventh Secretary-General of CARICOM.

Ambassador LaRocque's service at the CARICOM Secretariat began in September 2005, when he assumed the position of Assistant Secretary-General, Trade and Economic Integration. As Assistant Secretary-General, he provided strategic leadership for the continuing

implementation and further development of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), as well as the Sectoral Programmes of the Community including Agriculture, Services, Industry and Energy.

Prior to his appointment as Assistant Secretary-General, he served as Permanent Secretary in various Ministries in Dominica for more than fourteen years, including in the Ministries of Trade, Industry, Enterprise Development, Tourism, and Foreign Affairs where he headed the diplomatic service. He also served as the principal advisor to the Government of Dominica on all matters pertaining to economic integration and regional and international trade.

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Chef de Cabinet, Office of the Secretary-General, greets Amb. Irwin LaRocque on 15 August, his first day in office as Secretary-General of CARICOM.

about the need for jobs; about crime; about cricket; about the CARICOM Secretariat and many other issues of concern to the citizens of our Caribbean Community. While there was cynicism in some cases, a common thread in almost all of these messages and encounters was a commitment and belief in our integration movement, as well as hope for change. This in itself has been a most sobering but encouraging experience. It is that hope which as Secretary-General I will strive to fuel.

I assume the position of Secretary-General at a most testing time, a period when our Region is still feeling the effects of the recent global financial and economic crisis; a time when forecasters are predicting that we may be heading into another global recession that would no doubt impact on our small vulnerable economies and for which our cohesiveness becomes even more imperative; a time when the commitment of our Leaders to integration is being questioned by some; a time when some suggest that our people seem to be losing faith in integration as a means of improving their lives; a time

Ambassador LaRocque's speech continues next page

Ambassador LaRocque has a wealth of experience in management, public administration, economic development, trade, foreign affairs and diplomacy. During the period when Dominica underwent a structural adjustment programme, Ambassador LaRocque was a member of the Cabinet-appointed Public Sector Reform Task Force, which included the private sector, trade unions and non-governmental Organizations, with responsibility for the overall management, planning and performance review of the public sector reform process. He also served as the Chairman of the Consultative Working Group, a public/private sector consultative and advisory committee appointed by Cabinet, with focus on

the enabling environment for private sector development and growth.

He has served on several Boards, including the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center, Caribbean Export, the Dominica Agricultural, Industrial and Development Bank, and the Dominica National Development Corporation.

Ambassador LaRocque was educated at Queen's College and the New School for Social Research, both in New York, and New York University and majored in Political Philosophy, Pure Economics and Political Economics.

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CARICOM Secretariat staff members at the ceremony to mark the assumption of office of Secretary-General Irwin LaRocque on 15 August 2011

when we are grappling with rising fuel and food prices that are at unprecedented high levels; a time when our Member States are challenged by fiscal constraint; a time when the budget of the Secretariat has been reduced; and at a time when expectations by our Member States and the people of the Region are high.

The Conference of Heads of Government has mandated a review of the CARICOM Secretariat which will be concluded within a few months. They have also mandated a review of other regional institutions. I eagerly await the findings of both reviews since I am firmly of the view that the architecture and governance of our integration arrangements must be reformed if we are to be more effective and accountable in the discharge of our duties and functions. The message from all quarters is loud and clear: “it cannot be business as usual”; and I take these words to apply not just to the CARICOM Secretariat but to all aspects of our integration, including Member States and regional institutions. There is a general view out there that all things CARICOM, rightly or wrongly, are the purview of the CARICOM Secretariat. That is not necessarily the case; but if it is determined that this is how it should be, then the requisite reforms must be undertaken. There cannot be responsibility without authority.

At their Retreat here in Guyana on May 21st and 22nd of this year, Heads of Government laid down the priorities, focus and direction of the Community. They determined that while much has been accomplished in the Region, particularly in health and education, and in the area of the Single Market, there is need for greater focus on functional cooperation in building a Community for All. There is need for a greater sense of Community and a clear vision at the regional level so that the people of the Region can buy into it. I take the outcome of the Retreat as the broad mandate for the discharge of my duties during my term of office over the next five years.

While I am on the Retreat, allow me to say a few words about the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. During the Retreat, the Heads of Government recognized that it would not be possible to fully implement the Single Economy by the anticipated deadline of 2015. They also recognized that there is an implementation deficit on many of the decisions already taken on the CSME. They therefore agreed that it would be prudent to consolidate the gains made thus far on the CSME before taking any further action on certain specific elements of the Single Economy, such as the movement towards the single currency. You will note that the Heads of Government were very specific in making reference to the single currency

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Secretary-General Irwin LaRocque makes a point during a courtesy call he paid on His Excellency Dr. Nicholas J.O. Liverpool, D.A.H, OCC, President of Dominica in October. The Secretary-General was at the time on an official visit to Dominica, the land of his birth.

or monetary union. Since the Retreat, there have been many commentaries, some of which have gone so far as to state that the entire CSME is “on pause” and that there appears to be a lack of political will.

I would like to take this opportunity to correct the reports that we have placed the CARICOM Single Market and Economy “on pause”. Nothing can be further from the truth. We are moving resolutely with the CSME. Heads of Government recognize that the CSME provides a platform for sustainable economic development. Besides the single currency, work on other critical elements of the Single Economy, such as the development of the Sectors (Agriculture and Services), a regulatory framework for the movement of capital, and the creation of an enabling environment for investment, are very much alive. During my tenure, I intend to do all I can to advance work in these and other related areas. Indeed, I take this as a specific mandate coming out of the Retreat and the many decisions taken at other Meetings of Heads of Government.

I am very much aware that the pace at which the Community is advancing with the CSME does not meet the expectations of many. From my own personal perspective, we should be much further along; and I would like to see a significant improvement in implementation. But I am equally aware that many of our Member States face constraints, both technical and political, which cannot be ignored or easily overcome. We ought not to take a purely technical or theoretical approach

to integration, or think that the solution lies simply with “political will”. We must consider the politics of integration; and as one politician said to me that “all politics is national”, the politics of integration must be put squarely on the national agenda. As Secretary-General, it will be my duty to create the dialogue that would seek to find solutions to these and other constraints which are inhibiting the advancement of the integration of our Region in a timely manner.

While much has been achieved in our integration endeavors, and while much more needs to be achieved, the people of our Region seem not to be fully aware of these achievements or of the vision which we are pursuing. Too much of what has been accomplished remains a mystery to the people, and the misconception that ties the success of integration solely to progress in the Single Market and Economy remains a major challenge. Yes the CSME is of major importance but so too are education, health, security and the maintenance of strong diplomatic relations with our hemispheric and global partners.

Therefore, public education and communication will, of necessity, be a priority for me. I am fully convinced that if the people of the Region are properly informed of the benefits to be derived nationally from integration, CARICOM will more readily find its place on the national agenda, bearing in mind that “all politics is national”. The Secretariat has already

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Secretary-General Amb. Irwin LaRocque met the Hon. Samuel Hinds, Acting President of Guyana, shortly after assuming office on 15 August.

prepared a draft communication strategy which includes the full use of the technology at our disposal. It is my fervent hope that we will be on the social networks before long. After all, it is the preferred mode of communication among our Youth who are so important in the pursuit of the further development of our Region.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen,

I begin my tenure as Secretary-General, with no illusions about the journey before me. While I pledge to do my best to justify the trust and belief that the Heads of Government have placed in me, I acknowledge that I cannot do all that I want to do; indeed, all that I must do, alone. The entire Community must make this journey with me. I cannot make the strides we have to, without the total involvement of Member States and the people of the Region.

I wish to salute the staff of the CARICOM Secretariat who have displayed unwavering commitment to improving our Community. I am sure they will agree with me, however, we must improve our efficiency and effectiveness, and deliver our mandates in a manner that has as its primary goal, the most positive impact on the lives of the people in our Community. We must do so starting now, even as we await the conclusion of

the review of the Secretariat and the reform of the integration architecture. I pledge to be accessible and to lend a willing ear to the concerns of my staff even as I expect continued pride and commitment in performance, and I look forward to your continued support.

A critical element in going forward, however, will be a clear understanding that under the current conditions, the Secretariat can no longer be all things to all persons if we are to be more effective. We must be focused and adequately resourced, if we are to play the role envisaged by our Heads of Government.

To you, representatives of the media, you are a key stakeholder in this integration movement. As a valued partner and a beneficiary from the ultimate economic and social success of integration, I urge you to use your communication skills to strengthen and build confidence amongst the peoples of our Region in the integration movement.

I look forward to working with you all to advance regional integration to the point where, from Belize to Suriname, we can boast of a Community for All.'



AGRICULTURE ON THE NATURE ISLE

For an entire week in October, farmers, scientists, policy-makers, academia, technocrats and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector descended on Roseau, Dominica, to take stock of and continue charting the Community's course in the sector.

The stakeholders, who were in Roseau for the Tenth Caribbean Week of Agriculture (CWA), held under the theme Caribbean Food and Nutrition Security in a Changing Climate – the Nature Island Experience, were continuing what has become a staple on the Caribbean's Agriculture annual agenda, as well as a model for other regions to address issues affecting agriculture.

The week, from 9-15 October, 2011, was chockfull of activities that ranged from workshops and round table discussions, to a farmers' forum and field trips, an exposition of agricultural and agri-business products, and a Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED).

At the end of the wide-ranging activities, one thing was clear: the Region continues to place much store on the capacity of a 'repositioned agriculture sector' to drive economic growth, to move the Region towards food and nutrition security, and to create jobs for the youth, especially.

Leading the round of calls during the week of activities to reposition agriculture was the Hon. Ambrose George, then acting Prime Minister of Dominica.

"We need to take agriculture out of the closet and position it on the mantel to be showcased and valued," he told the formal opening ceremony of the CWA at Windsor Park Stadium in



Roseau.

Agriculture, he said, needed to be repositioned as the effective driver of the Region's sustainable development. The Acting Prime Minister queried whether serious attention was paid to the benefits of agriculture and how incomes from agriculture were spread in the economy. His question was posed against the background of daunting challenges the Region faced such as a high food import bill and the negative effects of climate change.

According to the Acting Prime Minister, using resources efficiently and adapting to the effects of climatic change and other shocks would be the hallmarks of smart farming in the coming decades.



FOCUS ON FARMERS

He pointed to the need for cohesiveness of policies to raise agricultural output, as well as a shift to smart farming and the creation of a more attractive image of the sector to encourage youth participation.

Focus on Farmers

Cognisant of the Region's ageing farming population, the involvement of youth in agriculture was a common thread running through the formal and informal presentations during the week of activities.

Referring to efforts to reverse the ageing trend, Mr. George said substantial and sustained investments focused on young farmers were essential to harness their energies and ambitions.

"While young people are a huge potential resource, many are migrating to cities in search of opportunities, leaving behind an increasingly ageing population and abandoned lands. It is vital – and ultimately beneficial for everyone – to turn this trend around. Reality will quickly dim the bright lights of the city for this generation. But if they stay on the farm, these upcoming farmers will be at the forefront of innovative, knowledge intensive and hence a productive agriculture," the Acting Prime Minister pointed out.

He warned that until everyone saw the need for this "better agriculture", and until regional institutions and development partners sought to build a more robust agricultural sector, food and nutrition insecurity would be common to the Region.

At a Farmers Forum held early in the week of activities, farmers, conceding that there were hardly any young persons entering the field, said there were aggressive efforts underway to make agriculture more attractive to youth and thus encourage them to become involved in the sector. They stressed that the creativity and energy of youth were integral to the sector's development.

One very strident voice in the promotion of agriculture as an attractive sector, particularly for young people was Mr. Jethro Greene, Chief Coordinator, Caribbean Farmers' Network (CAFAN). At the Farmers Forum, Mr. Greene pointed to the aggressive effort his association was making to "get youth involved in agriculture".

Declaring that farmers were moving towards the future with confidence, Mr. Greene alluded to CAFAN's vision of securing financing for small farmers. Bankers, he stressed, needed to see farming as a business.

Farmers at the forum agreed.

They advocated for financing to be made available to them, particularly in the context of the rising costs of agricultural inputs.

"The hostile environment towards farmers at lending institutions needs to change," one vegetable farmer said.

Another farmer referred to the matter of transportation to the regional market, and harked back to the days when there were shipping vessels dedicated to transporting agricultural produce.

The farmers acknowledged the multi-functional role of agriculture and indicated their readiness to move forward, to pool resources and energies and to shift to climate-smart agriculture.

The participants agreed that there was need for a new paradigm in the sector that encouraged the empowerment of farmers and their organizations, to participate in the decision-making process. The paradigm shift they recommended also had to include movement from traditional commodities to organic production including herbs and spices.

The new approach to agriculture was also the focus of other stakeholders, who, at various other fora, said there had to be a change in the way business was conducted in the sector. The focus, some of them felt, should be shifted to 'wealth creation' as opposed to 'poverty alleviation'.



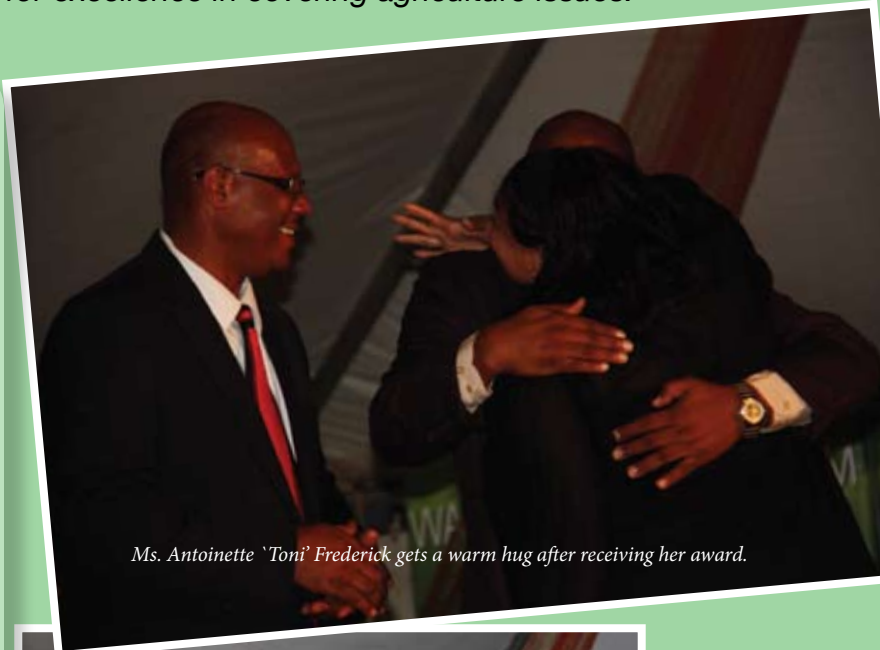
JOURNALISTS AWARDED FOR EXCELLENCE IN COVERING AGRICULTURE ISSUES

During the formal opening ceremony of the Caribbean Week of Agriculture 2011, four regional journalists were awarded for excellence in covering agriculture issues.

THE Inaugural Excellence in Communicating Agriculture Awards were presented to Gaulbert Sutherland, of the Stabroek News (Best Print News Story), Shaliza Hassanali of the Trinidad Guardian (Best Print Business Feature Story), Carry Bishop of the Jamaica Information Service (Best Television News Story), and Antoinette Frederick of WINN FM, St. Kitts and Nevis (Best News Story, Radio).

Journalists competed for the awards that were initiated by the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) in collaboration with the Association of Caribbean Media (ACM). The competition was open to all Caribbean full-time and freelance journalists in the print, broadcast and online media, and covered work published or broadcast between 1 May 2010 and 30 April 2011. Through the support of the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Cooperation on Agriculture and Rural Development (CTA), the Awards will be presented annually.

Three outstanding agriculturalists, Mr. Richard Allport of Dominican, Mr. Jean Fritz Boutin of Haiti, and Ms. Betty Finlay of Grenada, all of whom died under sudden and tragic circumstances, but whose contributions have left an indelible mark on the advancement of regional agriculture, were also recognized.



Ms. Antoinette 'Toni' Frederick gets a warm hug after receiving her award.



Gaulbert Sutherland



Shaliza Hassanali



Mr. Carry Bishop

PERTH DECLARATION ON FOOD SECURITY PRINCIPLES

29 October 2011

Caribbean Community Heads of Government were among leaders who participated in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Australia, in October, where food security was one of the key topics addressed. Below is a Declaration that reflects the Commonwealth leaders' shared approach to addressing the challenge of food insecurity.

1. Food insecurity is one of the most pressing and difficult global challenges of our time. This is a profound concern for the Commonwealth – half of the world's one billion hungry live in our nations. The global food crises of 2007 and 2008 and the ongoing volatility and uncertainty of world food markets underscore the need for sustained international engagement with the issue. The distressing humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa, most particularly in Somalia, and the drought, famine and famine-like situations occurring in other most vulnerable countries in the developing world highlight the difficulties we face.
2. Population growth will have a major impact on global demand for food. Additional factors, including scarce land and water resources, the diversion of fertile land, the reduction in crop species and use of crops for non-food purposes, urbanisation, distorted markets, and climate change, are intensifying pressures on supply. The world's poor and most vulnerable suffer most from food insecurity.
3. Commonwealth countries reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.
4. Commonwealth member states affirm the important role that women, youth, farming and fishing communities, civil society, and the private sector play in sustainable development and the need for their effective involvement in driving climate-smart agriculture and the food security agenda.
5. The Commonwealth is uniquely placed to support global food security efforts through Commonwealth countries' membership in all major global and regional forums that are engaged on this issue. Commonwealth countries therefore commit to use their membership of these forums to advocate the Perth Declaration on Food Security Principles to achieve outcomes that are relevant and meaningful to members. Commonwealth members further commit to use the Perth Declaration principles as a guide to support domestic efforts to build food security.
6. The Perth Declaration principles reflect our shared approach to addressing the challenge of food insecurity and are focused on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly women and children.
7. The Perth Declaration principles on food security call for:
 - a. coordinated and timely regional and global emergency relief efforts to deal with immediate crises;
 - b. undertaking decisive and timely measures to prevent crises occurring, mitigate their impact when they do and build resilience;
 - c. delivering practical measures over the medium-term to make agriculture, including irrigated agriculture, and fisheries more productive and sustainable;
 - d. strengthening support to government-led programmes and initiatives based on the spirit of effective partnerships;
 - e. development of country-led medium to long-term strategies and programmes to improve food security and ensure alignment of donor support to implementation of country priorities;
 - f. scaling up nutritional interventions, including those that target mothers and young children, and incorporating nutrition considerations into broad food security initiatives;
 - g. enhancing research and development over the longer term to build a sustainable agricultural sector,



PERTH DECLARATION ON FOOD SECURITY PRINCIPLES

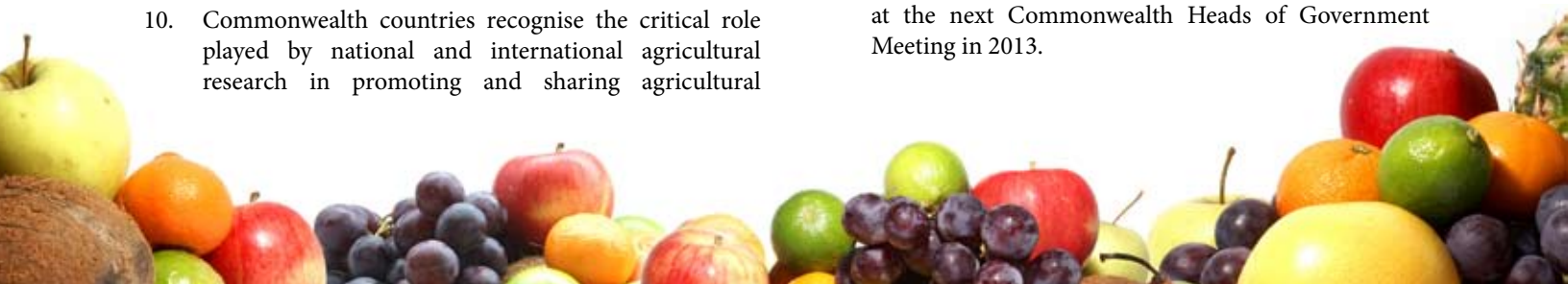
29 October 2011

including through the promotion and sharing of best agricultural practices, in order to feed and nourish the people of the world;

- h. strengthening fisheries and marine resource management in member states' waters to ensure sustainability of these resources for national and global food security, including through addressing illegal unregulated and unreported fishing;
 - i. improving international market access for food producers, including smallholders and women, through trade liberalisation measures such as the elimination of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and avoidance of restrictions on food exports;
 - j. addressing the impediments that are inhibiting economic opportunities for these important producers, including lack of affordable financing, local value-added and adequate infrastructure;
 - k. collaboration between international organisations, donor countries, and national governments to address production, storage, waste reduction, elimination of post-harvest losses, transportation and marketing challenges; this collaboration could include more effective ways of meeting infrastructure financing gaps that engage the private sector; and
 - l. improving the institutional framework for global food security efforts, including by supporting reform of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).
8. Commonwealth countries recognise that Africa has the potential not only to achieve food security but to become a significant net food exporter. Leaders commit to supporting efforts and initiatives such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), designed to realise the long term potential of Africa as a food producer and exporter.
 9. To support African agricultural production, Commonwealth countries have committed to direct action through major investments in agricultural productivity.
 10. Commonwealth countries recognise the critical role played by national and international agricultural research in promoting and sharing agricultural

technologies for enhanced crop yields, and undertake to deepen their cooperation.

11. Commonwealth countries also underline their critical role in managing and safeguarding a large proportion of the world's fish stocks.
12. In advocating the Perth Declaration principles, Commonwealth countries acknowledge the central role played by the United Nations in global food security governance and commit to show leadership in the United Nations by supporting food and nutrition security initiatives.
13. Committed to using the collective Commonwealth voice to influence global action, Commonwealth members urge the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 to commit to an ambitious programme of action to drive increased investment to boost sustainable global agricultural and fisheries productivity.
14. The Commonwealth, through its five G20 members, further commits to advocate for strong outcomes on food security at the G20 Cannes Summit, including to increase investment in appropriate agricultural technologies and sustainable productivity, to address market volatility and other market-distorting factors, and for food security, including fisheries, to be accorded a high priority within the forward G20 development agenda.
15. Recognising the ongoing critical food security needs, the Commonwealth welcomes the substantial contributions made by Canada, the UK and Australia in fulfilment of their L'Aquila Food Security Initiative commitments, and calls on countries that have not yet fulfilled their food security commitments to do so.
16. Commonwealth countries will continue to prioritise food security and will assess progress towards implementation of these principles on food security at the next Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2013.



FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

*Lecture By
Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit
Prime Minister of the
Commonwealth of Dominica
Delivered at the David Thompson
Memorial Lecture
October 27, 2011
UWI Cavehill, Barbados*



Hon Ronald Jones, Acting Prime Minister of Barbados, Hon. Mara Thompson, Widow of the late David Thompson, members of the illustrious Thompson family, Distinguished Ministers of Government and Members of Parliament, Members of the Diplomatic corps of Barbados: Principal, faculty and Guild of the University of the West Indies; Members of the councils of the Democratic Labour Party; Excellencies, other distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I particularly salute as well, our resident Caribbean brothers and sisters and wider Caribbean Diaspora, whom I am told are party to this historic event, via the worldwide web.

It was with a sense of pleasure, but also with remembrance of a departed colleague, that I accepted the challenge, and the opportunity to deliver this David Thompson Memorial Lecture.

David Thompson was my friend. Indeed, David Thompson was everybody's friend!

I cannot think of another Caribbean political personality who was more at home with, and embraced by political friend and foe alike in the region, than your late Prime Minister.

It was amazing how across these islands, even as the then Leader of the Opposition, David Thompson could arrive in an island, have breakfast with a Prime Ministerial friend, lunch with an Opposition leader friend, socialize with the barons of business in the early evening and easily mingle with the ordinary citizenry late at night.

He had an uncanny ability to make all persons with whom he came into contact relax and trusting of him. I sometimes find it difficult, given his warm personality and demeanor, to embrace the idea of him being a fierce political warrior on the field of battle. Yet, his record in politics speaks for itself.

I had the good fortune of meeting your late esteemed leader

VISION

At our Retreat of Heads of Government in May 2011, we reconfirmed how important it is that the mass of Caribbean people should be in tune with what we are trying to accomplish for the region, so that everyone can buy into it and see themselves as part of the process.

The Single Development Vision of 2007 is our blueprint for the future. It is a vision for sustainable development that encompasses the economic, social, ecological and governmental issues of our region. It is grouped into six broad elements:

1. Self-sustaining economic growth, based on strong international competitiveness, innovation, productivity, and flexibility of resource use;
2. A full-employment economy that provides a decent standard of living and quality of life for all citizens; elimination of poverty; and provision of adequate opportunities for young people, constituting an alternative to emigration;
3. Spatially equitable economic growth within

FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)

while being the youngest of political rookies in the 2000 General Election campaign in Dominica. Of course, we shared a common Political Advisor in my friend and brother, Hartley Henry.

From that first encounter, I knew I had established a potentially lasting friendship and mentorship...For his guidance of my trek in the lonesome business of politics and leadership, continued right up to about two weeks before his untimely passing, when I believe I had the distinction of being the only, and most certainly, the last colleague Prime Minister to have been granted an audience with him in those critical last days.

Even then, on his dying bed, David Thompson spoke with confidence about the capacity of the region to overcome current challenges and achieve the noble goals set by the founding fathers of regional integration.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, a vital organ in regional integration and cooperation was lost when David Thompson took his last breath on the morning of October 23rd, 2010.

Our friendship and close working relationship was heightened by the fact that in addition to everything else, David Thompson, as Prime Minister of Barbados, had the responsibility for the flagship of our integration strategy, the CSME. We were brothers together in this mission.

WHAT DO WE WANT

Our goals for our countries and for the Community remain as valid today as they were when the Revised Treaty Establishing the Caribbean Community, including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy was adopted in 2001.

It even goes as far back as 1973 when the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) were established following CARIFTA, the Caribbean Free Trade Area in 1967.

I myself, as Prime Minister of Dominica, have responsibility for Labour, including Free Movement of People, which is central to the effectiveness of our integration arrangements.

I come from an island where the descendants of the indigenous people, who once controlled this entire region, still survive. When their Caribbean society was in its prime, they had full freedom of movement to settle and work along these islands and the mainland as they pleased. They utilized the resources of this region in a balanced way for their mutual benefit. They had an amazing trade network that extended from the islands far into South and Central America.

the Community, having regard to the high growth potential of Member States with relatively low per capita incomes and large resources of under-utilised land and labour;

4. Social equity, social justice, social cohesion and personal security;
5. Environmental protection and ecological sustainability; and
6. Democratic, transparent and participatory governance.

It is envisioned that while the governments will provide the enabling environment, the private sector will play the leading role in investment, and in the ownership, management and operation of economic activities.

Civil Society will ensure social cohesiveness by maintaining those vital networks of community action, cultural activities and public discussion to keep us on the path. It will ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to fulfill their potential and is guaranteed the full enjoyment of their human rights in every sphere.

OUT & ABOUT



On an official visit to Barbados, Secretary-General Irwin LaRocque chats with from left, international musician, Eddi Grant, former Assistant Secretary-General, Trade and Economic Integration, Amb. Byron Blake, and Adviser to the Secretary-General, Mr. Neville Bissember.



Secretary-General Irwin LaRocque and His Excellency Desi Bouterse, President of Suriname, during the Secretary-General's official visit to Suriname in December 2011.



Secretary-General LaRocque engages the media during his official visit to Barbados.



Secretary-General Irwin LaRocque interacts with Suriname youth.



CARICOM Heads of Government and Delegation at a banquet held on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth, Australia in 28-30 October 2011.



Secretary-General Irwin LaRocque tries his hand at drumming in Suriname.



The official photographs of Heads of Government and Heads of Delegation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting held in Australia in October 2011.

FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)

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Buried in ancient village sites across these islands, our archaeologists have found pitch that was traded from the Pitch Lake in Trinidad, green stones from the Amazon region and Guyana; special flint tools from Antigua, and jade from as far as Belize and Guatemala. This was a truly interconnected region. The sea united the people, it did not divide them. Integration was not an issue because it was a way of life.

One of our Caribbean Nobel Laureates, the poet Derek Walcott, in his acceptance speech for his Nobel Prize, likened this region to a beautiful vase that had been shattered by its history into many pieces. What we in CARICOM are intent on doing, is to play our part in fitting those broken pieces together and to recreate a unified society of states that is modern and contemporary, but is inspired by the unity of our first people and the common heritage of those who followed them.

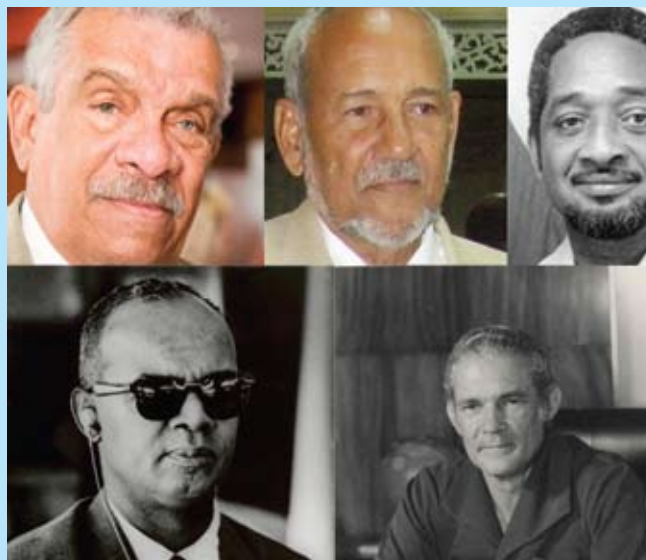
To put it plainly and at its most basic, the future of our countries which comprise the Caribbean Community, lies with CARICOM and regional integration. We are small vulnerable countries in a troubled world. There is an old saying, “When trouble comes, close ranks” and the best minds in our region, both past and present, have determined that regional integration is our best option and strategy for security and development. It is the key for moving successfully beyond survival to the growth and development of our economies and our citizens.

CARICOM

It may be useful to pause here and remember that CARICOM is not only about economics. It is about improving the quality of life of the citizens of 15 countries which are engaged with the organization at different levels. But to be fully supportive of this enterprise our people must see some positive signs of progress.

The concept of progress is like what they say about justice: “Justice must not only be done, but it must be seen to be done”.

Likewise, progress towards fulfilling the aims of CARICOM must not only be done at the secretariat and among the Heads of Government, but it must be seen to be done in the highways and byways of our Caribbean states. Sadly, it appears, that in



spite of over 40 years of work by governments and a generation of CARIFTA and CARICOM officials, enough progress has not been seen to be done so as to convince the mass of our people that this is a truly viable enterprise.

This means that the tripartite link between governments, the CARICOM bureaucrats and the mass of the people, has to be strengthened. If this is not done, CARICOM will remain, for the average Caribbean citizen, a vague entity floating somewhere out there in the Caribbean Sea; something that they only hear about during news broadcasts reporting on yet another conference or meeting.

The secretariat cannot continue to be seen as a moribund bureaucracy. Physically it may be located at the extreme southern end of the community, but idealistically it must be there in the centre, at the heart of the region. New vitality and dynamism must be injected. This must be initiated from the top, and I see it as important that we institute a set term for the post of the Secretary General. I would recommend a limit of two terms lasting four years each.

Further, we need to devise a mechanism by which leaders can communicate and interact more regularly and meaningfully. The success of efforts in the 1960s and 70s was born from the friendships that existed among that generation of leaders. The stories of Bird, Barrow, Burnham, Eric Williams, Michael Manley, James Mitchell and the like, are legendary. They were leaders, but more importantly they were friends, they were

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FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)



contemporaries who believed in what they were doing. We must rebuild the bonds of trust. We must convince everyone that this is their mission. We have to get across the point that pooling our sovereignty is not necessarily giving up our sovereignty. There are many examples where a regional policy in our single economic space is more effective than an insular national policy. This is so whether it relates to access to our fisheries resources or how we treat the issues of energy or environment across the region. Agreement on these regional policies and regimes has been long delayed.

For example, participation in the Caribbean Court of Justice, the CCJ, in its Appellate jurisdiction would strengthen and develop our Caribbean jurisprudence; by increasing access to justice with our very own highest appellate court in our own community. This would be a court that better reflects our laws and social norms and by its very existence, proclaims our independence.

The time is ripe for the private sector to take the initiative in using the framework established by the CSME for competitive production and supply of services.

In many ways the private sector has been more advanced in the integration movement than the governments themselves. For decades, companies across the region have developed networks of trade and investment in each other's territories. Insurance companies, banks, hotel chains, commission agents and manufacturing plants, maintain strong bonds across our nation states. Leading Caribbean businessmen have a network of friends and regional contacts which rivals that of the Heads of States! We want them to take full advantage of the opportunities open to them by CSME.

At the Retreat of Heads of Government last May, we determined that we needed to prioritize the focus and direction of the Community. This is because greater opportunities for development have arisen since we started

the process. For example, the changing nature of Information and Communication Technologies has revolutionised a whole range of issues in the region.

We therefore agreed on priority areas for regional action. These are:

- The CSME
- Free Movement of People
- Human and Social Development
- Agriculture
- Services
- External Relations
- Our infrastructure:
 - Energy
 - ICT
 - Transportation

CSME

Notwithstanding the somewhat slow pace of implementation, our development partners and the multilateral financial institutions have stressed the importance of deeper regional integration to economic prosperity in CARICOM. Indeed, the Deputy Managing Director of the IMF has argued that “the path to greater prosperity for the Caribbean lies in greater integration, within the region and with the rest of the world”.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of CSME is the commitment to the free movement of persons across the community.

First it is important to establish clearly that the Free Movement of Persons in CARICOM basically means that CARICOM nationals should be able to move in the community to which

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FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)

they belong without unnecessary hassle for the purposes of leisure, business or employment.

If the decisions to support and promote intra-regional travel are to make a difference, it is absolutely critical that they be implemented as intended:

- Grant of a definite entry of six months, irrespective of purpose of visit, when they arrive in other Member States. This has the benefit of enabling CARICOM Nationals to become familiar with other Member States of the Community, since many persons still don't know much about other countries in the Community;
- The acceptance of the CARICOM Passport as a defining symbol of regionalism; and
- All Member States should have effective common lines for CARICOM Nationals. (I am aware of the complaints of CARICOM Nationals that far too often the line for CARICOM Nationals is the slowest moving line and this is a matter, which we continuously must address as Heads of Government.)

The second component of the Free Movement of Persons relates to the Movement for Economic Purposes. To be abundantly clear, I am referring to the Free Movement of eligible Skilled Nationals, the Free Movement to Exercise the Right of Establishment and the Free Movement to Provide Services in the Single Market.

Member States have signaled that their markets are open with respect to the right of establishment and provision of services. We therefore have to ensure that the legislative and administrative framework is in place to enable persons to exercise their rights in the Single Market. The continued delay to put the framework in place could negatively affect the growth in business and economic activity and therefore production and exports of goods and services.

Further, the Community must ensure that the ten eligible categories of skilled nationals, namely: graduates, artistes, musicians, media workers, sports persons, teachers, nurses, artisans with a Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ), holders of associate degrees and household domestics with a CVQ or equivalent qualification are in a position to enter other Member States to seek employment and once found, engage in gainful employment. The Community is losing its skills to the rest of the world and is in a global competition for scarce skills.



Member states should not continue to hold on to unreasonable fears or hostility towards other CARICOM Nationals. The statistics reveal an unexpected picture. A comprehensive migration and free movement study conducted by the CARICOM Secretariat in the period June 2009 – June 2010 showed that approximately 4,500 persons moved under the Skills regime in the period 1997 – June 2010. In spite of these low figures there are persistent rumors that countries are being flooded by skilled CARICOM nationals.

The same study proved that in the period 2000 – June 2010 an estimated 85,000 work permits were issued by Member States, of which 63,750 were issued to nationals of third countries. By third countries we mean nationals who are NOT CARICOM citizens.

These findings clearly highlight that the main movers in our community in the past decade have been non CARICOM nationals. So foreign nationals are finding and creating job opportunities for themselves in our region while our CARICOM citizens do not appear to be taking full advantage of the opportunities open to them in this regard.

HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In the two decades and more since the Grand Anse Declaration in 1989, the challenges to our viability as nations and as a region have been multiplied several fold and increasingly threaten

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FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)

our very existence. We have become ever more aware for example, of the threats posed to our fragile ecosystems by the effects of climate change, to our security, by the unprecedented rise in crime and violence in our societies and the effects on our well being and economies of both communicable and non communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, hypertension, diabetes cancers and others.

Education and Health are the pillars of our Human Resource Development system. Through the efforts of the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS (PANCAP), the Region has seen the stabilisation of the epidemic in the region and significantly increased access to care and treatment for AIDS victims.

In the field of education, studies show that there is a mismatch between our education and training systems and the new requirements of our economies. This leads to the resulting 'unemployability' of graduates at both secondary and tertiary levels, the disenchantment of large numbers of our youth, especially our males and the consequential economic and social dislocation and ensuing ills. With an eye on the future, the CXC syllabus continues to drive the modernisation of secondary education in the region, through its deliberate attention to the skills and attitudes necessary for the information society and knowledge economy.

The University of the West Indies continues to be the prime institution through which many of our young people access tertiary education and also the lead institution with regard to research in several areas of our development. The establishment of the new Open Campus as a fourth campus of the university is a really imaginative and dynamic move. The continued improvement of each campus, particularly here at Cave Hill, under the inspired leadership of Sir Hilary Beckles, enhances the university's international standing.

As we look to ensure a sustainable future for CARICOM, we must pay special attention to our youth. The intended opportunities and benefits of the CSME will most likely accrue to the greatest extent to persons who are now in the 15 – 25 year age group. The importance of empowering youth, not only to become productive members of the labour force, but also to assume leadership roles at all levels cannot be overstated.



CRIME AND SECURITY

The Future of CARICOM is threatened in very real ways by the escalation of crime and violence across the region. It is instructive that the Commission reported that the young people of our region cited as their number one concern, crime and violence and their own personal security. The region has taken several steps to address the Crime and Security situation including new institutions and institutional arrangements.

This is being dealt with by the Ministerial Council, Committees of Permanent Secretaries, Heads of the Police, Immigration, Customs and Excise and the Agency for Crime and Security. There has also been the stepping up of training for law enforcement personnel and the introduction of the CARICOM Advance Passenger Information System (APIS). As a major tourist destination, in a world where everyone can be an instant worldwide reporter with their cell phone camera and social network site, bad news can spread fast. In such circumstances the reduction of crime is crucial for our economic as well as our own social well being.

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FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)



AGRICULTURE AND REGIONAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Food security and sovereignty are critical, and we must reduce our food import bill. The Caribbean Community is faced with a food import bill in the vicinity of \$3.5 to 4 billion per annum which we have got to control. In this regard, Caribbean governments face major external pressures over which they have little control. These include high world food prices, formidable international financial crises and adverse climatic conditions.

The Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy has an action plan that is part of the CARICOM Agricultural Policy which aims to ensure food security by increasing the productivity and competitiveness of Caribbean agriculture.

It also advocates greater food distribution through improved transportation and trade in farm produce within Caribbean and extra-regionally;

SERVICES

The Services sector is the largest sector of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy accounting for over three-quarters of total GDP within the Community between 2000 and 2008 and employing the most persons within the Community.

Given its economic significance, the service sector has to be the centre of the regional integration efforts. Tourism Services particularly, provide a means of expanding the local consumption base by bringing in foreign consumers and opening up the market to other innovative branches of the tourism industry. We must also give attention to investment into our cultural industries particularly in film and multi media.

Distribution Services for our products and advertising of our destinations must make greater use of our “Diaspora citizens” scattered across the globe, in the USA, in Canada, in Europe. Our people living in those market areas can buy from us, act

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FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)



as agents, and create market entry opportunities which will increase our exports.

THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

It is well established that CARICOM has not been fully utilizing the trade agreements which have been concluded to date.

In this regard, CARICOM must step-up the pace of implementation of these trade agreements and make every effort to reposition itself to engage with new economic and political partners.

Further, in an environment of increasing competition for private capital and rapidly decreasing development assistance, the region also needs to become much more competitive in attracting foreign capital and in generating and retaining regional savings for investment.

Undoubtedly, the external economic links with traditional developed country partners such as the EU, Canada, and the United States have been extremely valuable for CARICOM. However, the IMF and the World Bank have predicted that, over the next decade, the bulk of the growth in the world economy will be accounted for by the emerging and large

developing economies. It is therefore in our interest to make a concerted effort to adopt a coordinated approach to forge closer economic relations with non-traditional partners, such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Australia, Mexico, South Korea, and Venezuela.

Some of the countries mentioned above, have been doing extremely well economically and CARICOM as a whole can derive significant benefits from closer economic cooperation.

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE ENERGY

A secure, affordable and sustainable supply of energy is critical for our economic survival and prosperity. Unless the high cost energy is addressed, many of the noble economic objectives will not be realized. Several member states including Barbados, are taking steps to address their energy situation. However, some cleaner alternative energy sources such as geothermal and natural gas will not realize their full potential to provide lower cost fuel supplies unless there is significant cooperation among other member states.

For example, geothermal development in the OECS sub-

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FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)

region, particularly in Nevis and Dominica, is one area that holds potential to significantly change the fortunes of citizens there, by providing a stable, cleaner and lower cost electricity supply option. Dominica sees the development of its geothermal resource as having the potential of changing its energy status from being one of a net importer of energy to being a net exporter. But this must be developed in conjunction with several other countries to create the critical market size for that energy.

Through similar cooperation, the proposed natural gas pipeline from Trinidad has potential for providing lower cost fuel option to many eastern Caribbean States. Therefore, advancement towards an improved energy situation for many CARICOM countries will depend on increased functional cooperation while at the same time benefiting the regional Integration process.

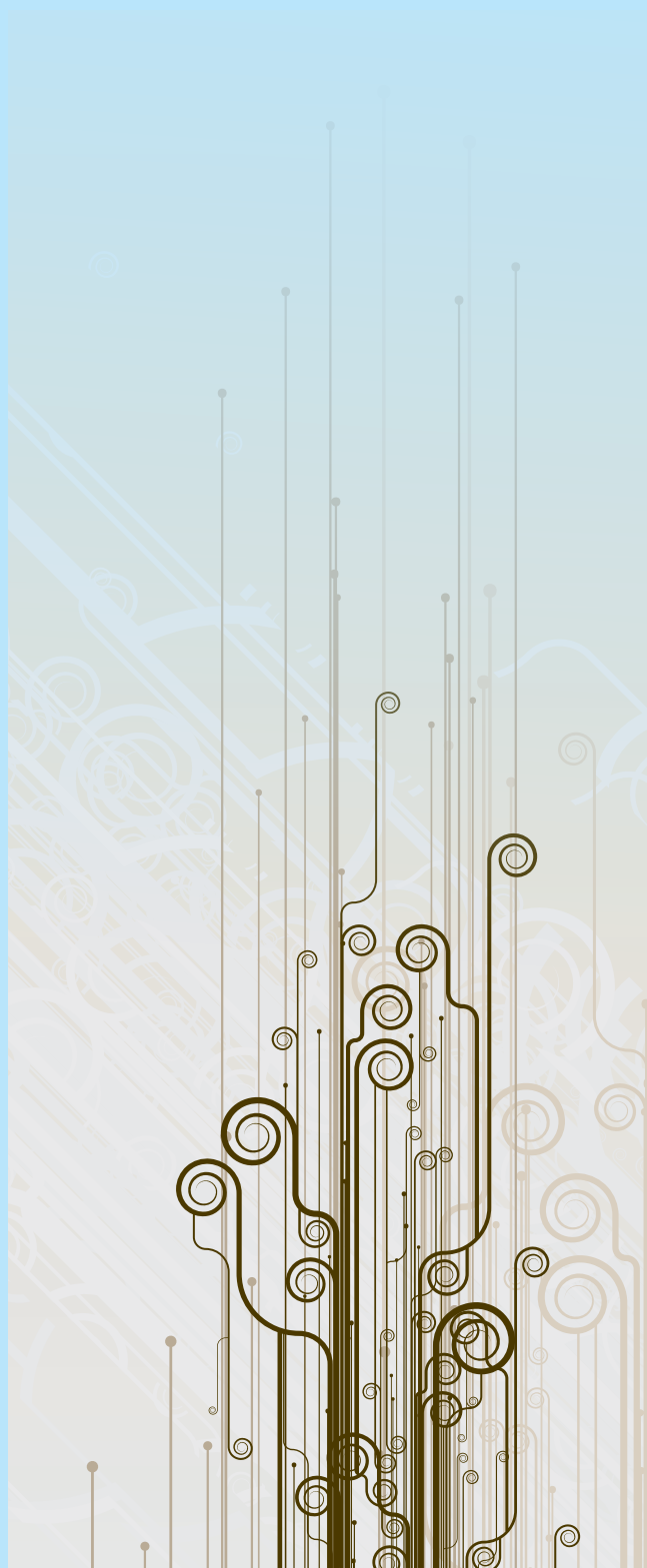
ICT: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Our Community of the future will be based on knowledge and information, given the demand for higher quality of goods and services and the ever present need to achieve competitiveness at national, regional and international levels.

Recent innovations in telecommunications have condensed time and space, accelerating the pace of globalisation in recent years, which is increasingly disintegrating economic and political nationalism and quickening regional integration worldwide.

In May of this year – we re-affirmed the importance of ICT4D (Information and Communications Technologies for Development) as one of the key drivers of our regional development and integration.

The Regional Digital Development Strategy gives guidance on issues dealing with ICT infrastructure and access and will position the region for optimum use of these technologies. The main recommendation of that strategy is that we seek to develop the CARICOM region as A Single ICT Space – one where we can reap the benefits of affordable access costs, access to high-speed or broad band networks, minimal roaming charges and shared networks. This programme will help governments improve their efficiency and transparency and will revolutionise access to information at all levels of the education system.



FUTURE OF CARICOM AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION (CONTINUED)

TRANSPORTATION

The future of CARICOM depends on improved inter-regional transportation.

A community made up mainly of island states depends for its very survival on efficient transportation links. In our case this issue is now close to crisis point.

Maritime transport is particularly pressing because of the rising costs and limited volume provided by air transport. Regional governments are currently negotiating the upgrading of our small vessels fleet and at the same time proposing ferry services for passengers and cargo.

Two of my colleagues, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar of Trinidad and Tobago and Prime Minister Freundel Stuart here in Barbados, have recently made statements on the importance of this service to connect the islands.

We were once world renown for our maritime industries, our schooner building and inter-island shipping. The Careenage, here in Barbados, was once a hub which kept food and goods and passengers on the move across the Caribbean Sea and beyond. There are some in this hall who will well remember the glory days of the Federal Maple and the Federal Palm. These two vessels, a generous gift from Canada, carried both passengers and cargo. They enabled school groups, scouts, girl guides, sports teams and UWI students to visit and develop links with other islands. It promoted a feeling of unity among them and facilitated businessmen in the expansion of regional trade. We need to recreate that network with state of the art vessels because it is crucial towards achieving the goals that I have outlined here.

I know you are aware that developments with respect to air transport have been in the news but the region still has to grapple with issues relating to air transport policy and air space. This is to complete the provision of air services in CARICOM pursuant to Chapters Three and Six in the Revised Treaty.

The challenge for us is that transport is a commercial enterprise as well as a developmental exercise and not all needed routes are commercially viable. External costs and fuel prices dog our best efforts but efficient transportation by sea and air will remain among our highest priorities in the years ahead.

CONCLUSION

To be quite frank, for the most part, the Community exists in the words of the Treaty only, rather than a tangible entity that is seen by its people as a vital part of their lives. The forces of historical necessity which might otherwise have driven the peoples together naturally are weak or non-existent. The Community at this time needs both unifying cultural symbols and an inspiring political rallying call that “all ah we got to be one”.

The other imperative is that the future of CARICOM requires serious commitment and direct action in relation to creating a market-led, internationally competitive production area of goods and services. Without this concerted drive to excellence everything else will fall by the wayside. To succeed we must provide the following:

1. A seamless market space connected by efficient and cost effective transportation.
2. A vibrant private sector promoting the development of an investor class.
3. Attractive investment opportunities.
4. A productive regionally integrated labour market, including a long range view of the skills needed, their movement and how work is done.
5. An efficient regionally integrated capital market.
6. Solutions to problems relating to energy that powers economic activity.
7. Building resource competence and capabilities that makes innovation possible.

In the words of John Donne, English Poet: “No man is an island entire of itself, every man is a piece of the continent a part of the main;” No island in the Caribbean Sea is an island entire of itself. To progress and prosper each must rely on the other for vital support and sustenance. No matter what formula you use, one from 15 can never be anything but fourteen!!

As Prime Minister Thompson remarked to the Press on the eve of the CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting, in Georgetown, Guyana, in July 2009, “going it alone or fragmenting into unworkable reconfigurations of the regional project” could not be “an enduring solution” for our small States.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I urge, let those words of the fallen Comrade be our guide and an inspiration in the years ahead. Thank you.

THE CCJ AND THE CSME

PROFESSOR JUSTICE DUKE E.E. POLLARD

The CCJ is probably the most innovative international judicial institution in the world today, both in terms of personal and institutional independence and autonomy of decision in financial affairs. Indeed the CCJ is the only international judicial institution in the world whose judges are not elected or appointed by political surrogates of states. Consider in this context the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, the European Court of Justice, the Andean Court of Justice, the Mercusor Court of Justice, the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States, the Central American Court of Justice and the Court of Justice of COMESA. The judges of all these international courts are either elected or appointed by Ministers of Government - hence perceptions of their vulnerability to the machinations of their respective political directorates.

Compare in this context the method of appointment of the judges of the CCJ. The criteria for appointment are set out in Article IV of the Agreement Establishing the CCJ. Thus, Article IV(11) requires judges to be of high moral character, intellectual and analytical ability, sound judgment, integrity and understanding of people and society. Article IV(10) requires candidates, in addition, to have at least five years experience as a judge of a court of unlimited jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters in the territory of a Contracting State or some part of the Commonwealth or a State exercising civil law jurisprudence common to Contracting Parties, or a court having jurisdiction in appeals from any such court, and who in the opinion of the Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission (RJLSC), has distinguished himself or herself in that office; or secondly, has been engaged in the practice or teaching of law for a period amounting to not less than fifteen (15) years in a Member State of the Caribbean Community or in a Contracting Party or in some part of the Commonwealth or in a State exercising civil law jurisprudence common to Contracting Parties and has distinguished himself or herself in the legal profession.

Any such person mentioned above may apply for a vacant position of judge on the Court and, after a successful interview with the RJLSC, may be appointed a judge of the Court. It is only in the case of the President of the Court that a three-quarters majority vote of the Contracting Parties is required for appointment to the post. Judges of the Court enjoy security of tenure similar to that enjoyed by constitutional judges of CARICOM States.

In financial matters, the CCJ enjoys greater autonomy of decision than any superior court in the world, national or

international. Member States parties to the Agreement Establishing the CCJ authorized the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) to raise US\$100,000,000 on international capital markets to be on-lent to such States in proportion to their projected contributions to the budget of the Court. The capital so raised was placed in the CCJ Trust Fund to be administered to defray the expenses of the Court by trustees selected from the private sector by the CARICOM Secretariat. In effect, the CCJ is completely independent, financially, from the regional political directorate which is unable to exert influence on the judges of the Court through the exercise of financial pressure. No other court in the world is known to enjoy such financial independence. The ECOWAS Court of Justice was allegedly considering a similar funding arrangement and even the European Court of Justice had apparently expressed interest in this arrangement. Provision is made in the Trust Fund Agreement for topping up of the Fund by Member States in the unlikely event of an unexpected shortfall in the capital of the Fund.

Turning now to the role of the CCJ in the CSME, a convenient point of departure is the status of CARICOM as a community of sovereign states, the dualistic jurisdiction of the overwhelming majority of those states and the inordinate dependence of CARICOM States on foreign direct investment for sustainable regional economic development. In this context, it is extremely important to bear in mind the provisions of Article 240(1) of the constituent instrument of the Caribbean Community which provides as follows: "Decisions of competent organs taken under this Treaty shall be subject to the relevant constitutional procedures of Member States before creating legally binding rights and obligations for nationals of such states." This provision states in the boldest terms the dualistic jurisdictional status of CARICOM Member States and poses a formidable impediment to the accelerated development of the CSME along desired lines.

This problem may be solved, however, in the way the United Kingdom addressed the problem created by dualism on her entry into the European Community as set out in Section (2) of the European Communities Act 1972. This provision, by virtue of the doctrine of Parliamentary supremacy accorded the force of law to both current and future determinations of Community Organs without the prior enacting intervention of the British Parliament. Whether CARICOM States are prepared to take a similar step will operate to provide an acid test of the seriousness of their commitment to regional economic integration, since what appears to be required is no less than appropriate amendments of their constitutions involving in some cases a qualified majority in a referendum.

BW 523 ACCIDENT

BW 523 at the site of the accident.
(Photo courtesy Demerara Waves)

GUYANA CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY LAUDS CASSOS SUPPORT

It was the worst accident in history of civil aviation in Guyana. Caribbean Airlines flight BW 523 with 168 passengers overran the runway of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, Timehri, in the wee hours of July 30, stopping just short of a 200-foot ravine.

The aircraft split in two. Passengers were injured, traumatised, bewildered, but miraculously, they were all alive.

Had there not been an efficient response, Director General of the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA), Mr. Zulficar Mohammed, and Ms. Paula Mc Adam, Director, Aviation Safety Regulations believe there could have been more serious consequences.

The two Guyanese officials reflected on the accident recently with the CARICOM View, lauding the local emergency response and the support of regional organization, the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Organisation (CASSOS), and the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Mr. Mohammed told the CARICOM View that an emergency response system was activated immediately after the accident. As a first response, the Guyana Fire Service, the hospitals, the Guyana Defence Force, and all relevant authorities were informed and deployed to the accident site.

Ms. McAdam, who is intimately involved in the investigations, recalled that at the time of the accident, Mr. Ramesh

Lutchmedial, Chairman of CASSOS, and Captain Gregory Fox, CASSOS Chief Executive Officer and Coordinator, were in Guyana for a meeting, and were at the scene supporting the GCAA.

SITE CONTROL

CASSOS's assistance, Ms McAdam said, was timely. According to protocol for aviation accidents, the integrity of evidence is paramount, so unauthorised access to the aircraft is strictly prohibited. CASSOS support was critical, Ms McAdam said, in taking control of the site as anxious passengers wanted to re-enter the aircraft to retrieve their luggage. The intervention by CASSOS prevented further structural damage to the aircraft and the eruption of fire that might have occurred had it been tampered with.

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CASSOS, formerly Regional Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (RASSOS) were inaugurated in July 2008 to assist CARICOM Member States achieve their obligations under international civil aviation conventions. Some of the objectives which add meaning to the work of CASSOS are the development of solutions to common aviation problems; the development and sharing of regional pool of expertise in the aviation sector; facilitation and promoting the development and harmonisation of civil aviation regulations, standards, practices and procedures among the CARICOM States and the wider region consistent with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) regulations; and the harmonisation of ICAO standards and recommended practices (SARPs) among CARICOM Member States consistent with the goals of the Community Transport Policy, are

The participation of states in CASSOS has been taken into account in respect of safety and oversight audits by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and ICAO, therefore when the accident occurred at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, the GCAA had to ensure that the steps were taken to secure the scene, aligned with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation Aircraft Accident and Investigation.

ACCORDING TO THE CONVENTION

The State of Occurrence shall take all reasonable measures to protect the evidence and to maintain safe custody of the aircraft and its contents for such a period as may be necessary for the purposes of an investigation. Protection of evidence

Describing the volume of work which the GCAA has been shouldering since July 30, Ms McAdam, who is also the Chief Investigative Officer, said that the process has been “an adventure.”

shall include the preservation, by photographic or other means of any evidence which might be removed, effaced, lost or destroyed. Safe custody shall include protection against further damage, access by unauthorized persons, pilfering and deterioration.

Mr. Zulficar said that because of the nature of the accident and Guyana's limited experience with investigations of major aviation accidents, the GCAA drew upon the experiences of CASSOS as well as the NTSB. The NTSB was immediately informed of the accident and it responded within an hour with appropriate guidance. It deployed an expert team the following day to launch an investigation on the instrumentation and performance of aircraft.

Describing the volume of work which the GCAA has been shouldering since July 30, Ms McAdam, who is also the Chief Investigative Officer, said that the process has been “an adventure.”

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However, she hastened to add that the weight of the demands which have been placed on her are somewhat lightened through the assistance and advice from CASSOS and NTSB. She added that the efficiency of reporting by several committees which were set up after the accident to support the investigation has helped.

Even though the accident in Guyana's aviation history, the GCAA Executive Director does not believe that it has damaged the country's reputation in respect of aviation safety and security.

Mr. Zulficar said he anticipated the end of the investigation, which would reveal the cause and effect surrounding the accident, but noted that conditions at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport are adequate for the type of aircraft operations it currently facilitates.

"While other countries and islands may have longer runways, and have larger aircraft operating, the aircraft that operate in Guyana's airspace do so very safely," Mr. Zulficar stated.

He said that the collaborative emergency response put into effect after the accident by the relevant government agencies was permanent. There is an emergency plan in place which includes simulation exercises to test the capabilities and build the capacity of emergency response agencies, the GCAA Executive Director added.

Noting that the GCAA plays a technical, coordinating role in local aviation emergencies, he added that the back-up services from the Guyana Defence Force, Guyana Police Force, the public health services all have been trained to respond with alacrity once they have been properly briefed as they were on July 30.

Statement by the Hon. Dr. Denzil Douglas, Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, on the role of the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS) in the investigation into the 30 July aircraft crash at Cheddi Jagan International Airport, Timehri, Guyana

On behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) I extend appreciation to the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS), a CARICOM institution formally launched in 2009, for the support it has been providing to the ongoing investigation into the Caribbean Airlines crash landing at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA), Timehri, Guyana, on 30 July 2011.

The Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM agreed at their last Regular Meeting to locate the permanent headquarters of CASSOS in Jamaica. Under international protocols, the institution is officially represented on the investigating team and has fielded inspectors from

Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname in keeping with its mandate to facilitate multifaceted and widespread problem-solving regarding issues of safety oversight and infrastructure.

CARICOM extends thanks to Mr. Ramesh Lutchmedial, Chairman of CASSOS and Director of Civil Aviation of Trinidad and Tobago and the other Members of the CASSOS team for their work on behalf of our Community.

The Caribbean Community again commends the swift action by the Government of Guyana and Caribbean Airlines in this mishap. I extend best wishes for the speedy recovery to those who suffered injuries as a result of the crash.'

INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Opportunity to build awareness, respect for African heritage, culture – Ambassador Applewhaite

The observance of the International Year for People of African Descent provided the international community with an opportunity to redouble its efforts to eradicate discrimination against people of African descent, and build an awareness and respect for their diverse heritage and culture.

This was the view articulated by Ambassador Lolita Applewhaite, then Acting Secretary-General of CARICOM, at the launch of activities in Guyana in January 2011, to mark the United Nations-designated year. The launch was held at the Guyana International Convention Centre, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown.

Ambassador Applewhaite acknowledged that the equality in treatment of all people, and respect for their right to life free from discrimination and poverty, was essential to international peace and security and to building stable communities and nations.

Below is an excerpt from speech delivered by Ambassador Applewhaite:

“As we gather across the globe to mark this important Year, we come with the realisation that equality in treatment of all people, and respect for their right to a life free from discrimination and poverty, is essential to international peace and security and to building stable communities and nations.

This observance has provided the international Community of Nations with yet another opportunity to redouble their efforts to eradicate discrimination against people of African descent, and to build an awareness and respect for their diverse heritage and culture.

We recall a previous opportunity when, in 2007, the United Nations observed the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, in which Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) played an active role in instigating the commemorative event. Twenty-Fifth

“*This observance has provided the international Community of Nations with yet another opportunity to redouble their efforts to eradicate discrimination against people of African descent, and to build an awareness and respect for their diverse heritage and culture.*”

March 2007 was designated the International Day to mark the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade through the adoption of a resolution by the 61st General Assembly of the UN which was co-sponsored by our Region.

On this occasion of the International Year for People of African Descent, it is important that the Community of Nations first acknowledge the many ways in which discrimination, injustice, deprivation, and psychological trauma have been both imposed on and experienced by people of African descent, and which have been perpetuated to the present. Poverty, underdevelopment, racism and social exclusion continue to affect people of African descent disproportionately all over the world and with deleterious effects on this ethnic group and the wider societies in which they live.

Too many persons of African descent in the world do not have access to basic services in health and education and thereby have difficulty in realising their full potential and contributing meaningfully to the advancement of their families, communities and nations. Too many persons of African descent in the world are caught in a cycle of persistent poverty from generation to generation, and too many in 2011 are no better off economically or in their quality of life than our 18th century fore bearers who were enslaved.

These are the harsh realities which result in significant measure from pervasive and systemic injustice and discrimination, for

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which the international community needs a “wake up call” in order to accelerate regional and international cooperation, to ensure people of African descent have full enjoyment of their rights to participate in all the political, economic, social and cultural facets of society.

On an occasion such as this, however, it is also important to highlight and celebrate the many achievements of persons of African descent, and their significant contributions, especially to national and regional development in CARICOM.

Our Region’s highly respected international reputation as being intolerant of inequality and discrimination was built partly on the foundation of the unrelenting resistance of enslaved Africans, embodied in martyrs and leaders of the slave revolts such as Toussaint L’Overture in Haiti; Nanny and Tacky in Jamaica; Codjo, Mentor and Present in Suriname; Bussa in Barbados and Cuffy and Damon in Guyana, among countless others.

It was built on the shoulders of our many heroes of African descent – most notably the great Pan-Africanist, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, National Hero of Jamaica, ardent advocate of black racial pride, and who had a profound impact on the consciousness of a mass movement of Diasporic Africans in the United States, the Caribbean and Central America in the 1920s and ‘30s.

The Rastafarian religious, cultural and social movement has revolutionised the consciousness of Caribbean people and many others outside our Region, through its uncompromising advocacy for self reliance and hard work, equal rights and justice, racial pride and peace.

In addition to the myriad ways in which people of African descent have and continue to make a sterling contribution to the development of Caribbean civilisation in all spheres of life, highly acclaimed regional cultural icon - the late Professor the Honourable Rex Nettleford of Jamaica, in his address to a special session of the UN General Assembly on 26 March 2007, to mark the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, asserted that, in the Caribbean:

“the African presence continues to make the impact where it most matters, in the enduring areas of language, religion, artistic manifestations and even kinship patterns, as well as

“*Our Region’s highly respected international reputation as being intolerant of inequality and discrimination was built partly on the foundation of the unrelenting resistance of enslaved Africans, embodied in martyrs and leaders of the slave revolts such as Toussaint L’Overture in Haiti; Nanny and Tacky in Jamaica; Codjo, Mentor and Present in Suriname; Bussa in Barbados and Cuffy and Damon in Guyana, among countless others.*”

in areas of ontology and cosmology rooted in the creative diversity that is now the global reality of our Third Millennium and has been the lived reality of the Caribbean and the wider Americas of which the Caribbean is an iconic integral part.”

Indeed the African presence is strong in the creation of a distinctive Caribbean brand, a unique identity and self liberating ideology, proclaimed to the world in the creative genius of Marley, Sparrow, Rudder, Arrow, Machel, Shaggy, Boukman Esperans, Kassav, Gabby, Walcott, Harris, Lovelace, Lamming, Rodney, Fanon, Nettleford -- and the list goes on; and in the creation of the steel pan, our diverse carnival arts, the iconography of Rastafari and a profusion of other forms of cultural expression.

In closing, I leave with you the words of Aime Cesaire, regional cultural icon from Martinique, who reminds us in his widely celebrated poetry, “Return to My Native Land”, that:

“No race holds the monopoly of beauty, of intellect, of strength, And there is a place for all at the Rendezvous of Victory”.

And may this historic year continue the journey to that rendezvous for our brothers and sisters of African Descent.



Antigua and Barbuda

The Bahamas

Barbados

Belize

Dominica

Grenada

Guyana

Haiti

Jamaica

Montserrat

Saint Lucia

St. Kitts and Nevis

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Suriname

Trinidad and Tobago