



**THIRTY-EIGHTH
REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
CONFERENCE OF HEADS
OF GOVERNMENT
OF THE
CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY**



DECISIONS

CHAIRMAN:

**Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell
Prime Minister of Grenada**

VENUE AND DATE:

**St. George's
GRENADA**

July 4-6, 2017

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat

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ISBN 978-976-600-450-7 (E-book)

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Printed in Guyana

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HGC/2017/38/4 REGIONAL SECURITY

Having considered in Caucus Paper HGC/2017/38/4 entitled "*Regional Security*", and reviewed the status of the security related legal instruments being considered by Member States;

Recognising the importance of concluding on these Instruments as soon as possible;

Noting that the Legal Affairs Committee (LAC) has approved a draft model anti-terrorism bill for enactment by Member States;

THE CONFERENCE:

Urged Member States to sign and/or ratify the Protocol Amending the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to incorporate the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) as an Organ of the Community and the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) as an Institution of the Community;

Encouraged Member States which have not yet done so, to enact legislation and adopt administrative measures to implement the Caribbean Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Serious Criminal Matters (MLAT);

Mandated the Secretariat to urgently advance the work on a redraft of the CARICOM Maritime and Airspace Security Co-operation Agreement (MASCA);

Also mandated the Secretariat to work in collaboration with IMPACS to prepare a model civil forfeiture bill;

Also urged Member States to take the necessary action to give effect to the Security Instruments and Legislation that have been approved;

Further urged Member States with outstanding arrears of contribution to IMPACS to clear such arrears as soon as possible.

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**HGC/2017/38/5 INSTRUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR ADOPTION AND
SIGNATURE**

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/5 entitled "*Instruments submitted for Adoption and Signature*";

THE CONFERENCE:

Adopted and **opened for signature**:

- (i) The Agreement Establishing the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE); and
- (ii) The CARICOM Arrest Warrant Treaty.

**HGC/2017/38/6 OUTSTANDING ISSUES RELATED TO THE SINGLE
MARKET AND ECONOMY**

HGC/2017/38/6.1 CSME Review

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/6.1 entitled "*Outstanding Issues Related to the Single Market and Economy – CSME Review*", the update provided and, in particular, the critical issues identified and the presentation by the Lead Head of Government with responsibility for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME);

Noting the lateness or non-response from several Member States regarding the submission of comments on the proposed Implementation Plan;

Recognising the challenges faced by Member States in implementing the CSME;

Also recognising that the CARICOM Secretariat, The University of the West Indies (The UWI) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) would be collaborating to undertake an assessment on the economic impact of the CSME as requested by Member States;

Acknowledging the request for guidance, particularly relating to The Bahamas, Haiti and Montserrat and to the definition of a CARICOM National;

Also noting the proposals to solve the foreign exchange difficulties affecting trade among Member States;

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Also acknowledging that the timelines in the Implementation Plan are indicative;

Taking into account the need for the accelerated implementation and use of the CSME;

THE CONFERENCE:

Approved the Implementation Plan for the CSME 2017-2019;

Instructed the CARICOM Committee of Ambassadors (CCA) to complete within six (6) months, the procedures to which Member States would adhere on the Refusal of Entry of CARICOM Nationals;

Mandated that the relevant Organs and Bodies meet to consider and advise, no later than the Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference in 2018, on the matters requiring guidance, in particular those relating to The Bahamas, Haiti and Montserrat and to the definition of a CARICOM National;

Agreed -

- (i) that the next Meeting of the Council for Finance and Planning (COFAP) should be held in October 2017 at the time of the Annual Meetings of the IMF and World Bank, preceded by a Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials in September 2017;
- (ii) to revert thereafter to its earlier decision that meetings of the COFAP would be held immediately prior to the regular meetings of the Conference;
- (iii) that a special meeting of the Conference would be held to have a comprehensive discussion on the CSME;

Also mandated the Secretariat to assist Member States, where possible, in setting up or refining the consultative structures among the policy-makers, implementers and users of the CSME;

Reiterated its decision taken at its Nineteenth Inter-Sessional Meeting to remove the requirement for visas for Haitian nationals who are holders of diplomatic and official passports;

Also reiterated its decision taken at its Thirty-First Regular Meeting to remove the requirement for visas for Haitian national business persons, holders of US, Canadian or Schengen visas;

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**HGC/2017/38/6.2 *Non-Compliance with Provisions of the Revised Treaty:
Market Access for Honey and Duck Meat into Trinidad
and Tobago***

Having considered in Caucus Paper HGC/2017/38/6.2 entitled “Non-Compliance with Provisions of the Revised Treaty: Market Access for Honey into Trinidad and Tobago”;

Having also considered in Caucus the statements by the Suriname representative and the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago with regard to Market Access for Duck Meat from Suriname into Trinidad and Tobago;

Recalling its decision taken at the Twenty-Eighth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference in February 2017 (HGC/2017/28/Dec.7 (iii)) that Trinidad and Tobago provide Grenada and the Secretary-General, by 30 June 2017, with the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements as well as the food safety requirements that must be met by a Member State seeking to export honey to, or trans-ship honey through, Trinidad and Tobago;

THE CONFERENCE:

Reiterated the decisions of the Twenty-Eighth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference that Trinidad and Tobago provide Grenada and the Secretary-General with the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements as well as the food safety requirements that must be met by a Member State seeking to export honey to, or trans-ship honey through, Trinidad and Tobago;

Agreed that –

- (i) the Secretary-General would advise Trinidad and Tobago of the Treaty provisions governing the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures;
- (ii) any risk assessment to be undertaken would be done by the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) and the CAHFSA team shall include a representative from Trinidad and Tobago. The results of the assessment would be respected by all Member States;

Also agreed that Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago would ensure that their technical personnel have a further exchange on the matter of market access for duck meat into Trinidad and Tobago.

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HGC/2017/38/6.3 *Submission from the CARICOM Commission on the Economy*

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/6.3 entitled, “*Outstanding Issues Related to the Single Market and Economy: Submission from the CARICOM Commission on the Economy*” and having received a presentation on “*Delivering Development Results in the Caribbean: The Art and Science of Delivery*” from the representative of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB);

Acknowledging -

- (i) the consistent lag in growth performance between CARICOM States and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as well as the prevailing implementation challenges and deficit as a critical constraint on sustainable growth and development in the Community;
- (ii) that delivery units (that is, a small group of highly skilled persons working at the centre of government to help line Ministries and agencies achieve outcomes in specific areas, or in relation to initiatives or objectives) can potentially offer a means by which Member States can advance key reforms to improve productivity and competitiveness and, in so doing, accelerate growth and sustainable development;
- (iii) that the success of such units is dependent on the focus on a few key deliverables as well as the commitment and sponsorship from the highest level of government;

Noting the success of the performance management delivery unit model internationally, as well as in Jamaica, in delivering key reforms and successfully achieving desired socio-economic outcomes;

Also acknowledging the importance of urgent approval of a new CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA) as recommended by the Sixty-Sixth Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Integration (COTED) (St Vincent and the Grenadines, June 2017), specifically within the context of positioning the tourism sector as a growth driver in the Community;

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THE CONFERENCE:

With respect to “Delivering Development Results in the Caribbean” through Performance Management Delivery Units,

Commended the CDB for elaborating a constructive approach to addressing the delivery/implementation challenges confronting Member States as they seek to resuscitate sustainable economic growth and development in the Community;

Welcomed the initiative by the CDB to undertake further research into the practicalities of establishing national performance management delivery units and how best to support such initiatives given the unique development challenges of CARICOM States;

Supported the elements of the programme to advance the initiative, namely –

- (i) the convening of a ministerial workshop to set priorities;
- (ii) determination of national development programmes in accord with the broad priorities;
- (iii) determination of the scope and structure of individual country delivery units;

Agreed to consider the specific proposals for such delivery units and to engage with the CDB in the design phases of the initiative.

With respect to the priority measures to complement the new CARICOM MASA,

Committed to the achievement, within the shortest time possible, and the maintenance of a minimum 80% compliance level with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices by all Member States;

Also agreed to the operationalization of the Community of Interest Principle to guide liberalized Air Services Agreements between Member States and Third States;

Further agreed to the joint negotiation (as CARICOM) of future Air Services Agreements with potential targets identified as China, Japan, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE);

Recognised the need for the administrative strengthening of the legal, operational and institutional framework as well as the appropriate resourcing of the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS), to enable it to discharge its mandate as an effective and efficient Regional Safety Oversight Organisation;

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Agreed to address the issue of the multi-layered regime of aviation taxes within the context of an appropriate mechanism for the financing of civil aviation related activities and **requested** the CDB to finance a study on the impact of aviation taxes on the economies of Member States;

Mandated the formulation of a roadmap by February 2018 to accelerate work on functional cooperation among Government-owned airlines within the Region.

HGC/2017/38/7 FUTURE TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM (UK), POST-BREXIT

Having considered Paper No. HGC/2017/38/7 entitled *“Future Trade Relations with the United Kingdom (UK), Post-BREXIT”*;

Recognising that the Region must move urgently to forge an agreement with the United Kingdom, which guarantees that there will be no interruption in preferential CARICOM/UK trade once BREXIT takes place;

Noting the willingness of the United Kingdom Government to roll-over the provisions of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA into a post-BREXIT arrangement;

Also noting the desire of the United Kingdom Government to engage with the CARIFORUM grouping regarding the post-BREXIT arrangements;

Also recognising the need to strengthen the development co-operation relationship with the United Kingdom;

Further noting the desire of the British Virgin Islands to enhance its status in CARIFORUM in light of the uncertainty of its relationship with the European Union (EU) post-Brexit;

Taking into account the comments of Delegations;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed that –

- (i) the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) should seek to conclude an Agreement that would govern trade between the CARICOM States and the Dominican Republic on the one hand, and the United Kingdom on the other, after the United Kingdom leaves the EU, with a view to ensuring certainty and

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predictability for the Region's preferential trading relationship with the United Kingdom post-BREXIT;

- (ii) the discussions with the United Kingdom should continue as soon as possible with a view to their urgent completion;
- (iii) CARICOM should seek the concurrence of the Dominican Republic in negotiating a CARIFORUM-UK "roll-over" Agreement;
- (iv) the Agreement with the United Kingdom should "roll-over" as much as possible, the trade and trade-related cooperation provisions of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA and that the terms of such Agreement should be settled as soon as possible, but in any event, prior to March 2019;
- (v) as appropriate, the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) would be available to convene special sessions, prior to meetings of the Trade Ministers of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic, in order to provide oversight and mandates with respect to the negotiations;
- (vi) technical-level discussions, aimed at identifying the appropriate content and language of the "roll over" Agreement to be agreed with the United Kingdom, shall be coordinated by the CARICOM Secretariat's Office of Trade Negotiations, the CARIFORUM Directorate and the OECS Commission, supported by CARICOM Member States and the Dominican Republic;

Also agreed that the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee (PMSC) on External Negotiations would be available to provide oversight in-between meetings of the Conference;

Further agreed that the Community would engage the United Kingdom, with a view to strengthening cooperation, taking into account issues highlighted in the EPA reviews, and developments of importance to CARICOM, such as aid-for-trade, graduation and climate change;

Recognised that the issues relating to the possible negotiation of a future, enhanced agreement with the United Kingdom would be further discussed in tandem with those matters relating to the future of CARICOM's trade policy, at a dedicated meeting of Senior Officials which would make appropriate recommendations to the COTED;

Agreed that the Secretariat would look into the matter of the British Virgin Islands' deeper participation in CARIFORUM.

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**HGC/2017/38/8 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COTED (Air
Transportation)**

HGC/2017/38/8.1 CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA)

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/8 entitled *“Recommendation from the COTED (Air Transportation)” with respect to the CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA)*;

Recalling the decisions of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) and the Conference with respect to revising the Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA);

Acknowledging the long and consultative process that had been involved in finalising the New MASA which is very much overdue;

Welcoming the offer of assistance for possible funding by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for a further assessment and review of the validity of a system for single security clearance for the Community;

Also acknowledging that the Articles on Essential Air Services and Subsidies required more time for consideration and that these Articles are to be considered in a Built-In Agenda to be completed in a definitive timeframe;

Noting that some Member States, particularly Guyana, Jamaica and Saint Lucia still have some concerns that needed to be resolved with respect to –

- (i) Definition of the “CARICOM Air Carrier” and that principal place of business should be included;
- (ii) 7th Freedom - Implementation would require a policy change with respect to passenger operation;
- (iii) Article 11 Aviation Security - The requirements with respects to the single security check would require possible additional capital expenditure to meet international requirements;
- (iv) Article 10 Safety – The provisions with respect to ramp inspections were not required for aircraft of CARICOM Member States;
- (v) Shareholding disclosure;
- (vi) Licensing Requirements;

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Further acknowledging that some Member States need to complete procedural requirements;

THE CONFERENCE:

Endorsed, in general, the scope and policy positions in the draft New Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA) rev 8, ... except those raised by Member States as still needing to be resolved;

Agreed to the following procedure for the finalization of the New MASA for signature –

- (i) the Secretariat would consult with the Member States on the issues raised with a view towards resolution;
- (ii) Member States would agree on a clean final draft of the New MASA;
- (iii) the Secretariat would –
 - (a) consult with the Lead Head of Government for Transportation on the readiness of the new MASA for submission to the Legal Affairs Committee (LAC);
 - (b) submit the new MASA document to the LAC for finalization;

Also agreed that the LAC should finalise the drafting of the New MASA for signature at the Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference in 2018, with the understanding that all the policy matters reflected in the draft had been agreed;

Further agreed that the matter of Essential Air Services and Subsidies would be considered in a Built-In Agenda to be completed for consideration at its Inter-Sessional Meeting in 2018;

HGC/2017/38/8.2 *Report of the Regional Transportation Commission*

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/8 entitled “*Recommendation from the COTED (Air Transportation)*” with respect to the Report of the Regional Transportation Commission;

Acknowledging that the momentum of the work of the Regional Transportation Commission needed to be accelerated;

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Noting that the major constraint to the execution of the work of the Commission was the lack of budgetary resources;

THE CONFERENCE:

Endorsed the priority areas in the Work Programme of the Regional Transportation Commission as follows:

- (i) delivery of adequate, fair, competitive, efficient transportation services at affordable costs;
- (ii) paramount need for the safety and security of the transportation infrastructure;
- (iii) cost and sustainability of transportation in the Region;
- (iv) maintenance of essential air and maritime links with external partners at the international level;
- (v) re-establishment of the Single Domestic Space and seamless movement of CARICOM nationals through regional airports;
- (vi) strengthening of the economic development of the CARICOM Region and the Member States, and their economic integration through trade and the movement of people and freight;

Requested the Transportation Commission, in collaboration with the Secretariat and the CARICOM Commission on the Economy (CCE), to develop the requisite proposals and mobilise the necessary resources to enable the continuation of the work of the Commission.

HGC/2017/38/8.3 *Regional Air Services*

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/8 entitled *“Recommendation from the COTED (Air Transportation)”* with respect to *Regional Air Services*;

Commending the Secretariat and the Regional Transportation Commission for convening a productive COTED (Transportation) Meeting;

Welcoming Curacao as an Associate Member of the Caribbean Aviation and Security Oversight System (CASSOS);

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Also commending the Government-owned Airlines for their level of collaboration and cooperation that was reported and their continued efforts to increase the level of collaboration and coordination;

Noting the benefits that would derive from a Single Air Space;

Recognising the importance of CARICOM Member States increasing their respective levels of effective implementation of ICAO Standards and recommended Practices, including its importance for achieving hassle-free travel in the Region, while taking into account the current safety and security issues as well as contributing to the establishment of the environment for a single airspace;

Expressing support to ICAO's effort to assist CARICOM Member States in increasing their respective levels of effective implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices;

Welcoming the willingness of ICAO to provide financial and technical assistance for a number of the initiatives under consideration, including for the establishment of a Single Airspace and the Single Domestic Space in addition to that offered towards advancing a single security clearance;

THE CONFERENCE:

Requested the Government-Owned Airlines to continue to work towards increasing their level of collaboration and coordination;

Agreed that the establishment of a Single Airspace should be pursued and **approved** the undertaking of the short-term plan, including the development of the lower airspace, namely the Member States within the Piarco Flight Information Region (FIR);

Mandated the Secretariat to work with CASSOS and relevant agencies to define a roadmap and identify the necessary resources for its development/implementation;

Urged Member States –

- (i) to ratify and implement, as soon as possible, ICAO's new Standards and Recommended Practices for airport security Annex 17, Security-Safeguarding international civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference;
- (ii) to take advantage of the programmes and mechanisms in place to access funding and technical assistance through ICAO for undertaking programmes under the No Country Left Behind (NCLB) Initiative, as a matter of urgency, so as to increase their effective implementation of the aviation standards and recommended practices

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HGC/2017/38/8.4 Caribbean Air Navigation and Advisory Services (CANAS)

Having considered in Caucus Paper HGC/2017/38/8 Add. entitled "*Unresolved Issues Relating to Caribbean Air Navigation and Advisory Services (CANAS) – Note Prepared by the CARICOM Secretariat*";

Noting that the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines, on behalf of the OECS countries, had written the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago on the issues relating to the concerns of the OECS - setting of fees, sharing of revenue, transparency and lack of representation on the Board of CANAS;

Also noting the undertaking by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago to respond to the correspondence of the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines on behalf of the OECS as early as possible;

Acknowledging that the model used by the Central American Cooperation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA) could be used as a guide in seeking to streamline and optimize the management of the Piarco Flight Information Region (FIR);

THE CONFERENCE:

Urged the affected parties to engage in bilateral meetings to chart the course for a resolution of the issues raised.

HGC/2017/38/9 TOURISM IN THE REGION: BUILDING A CARIBBEAN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING INITIATIVE

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/9 entitled, "*Tourism in the Region: Building a Caribbean Tourism Development and Marketing Initiative*";

Noting that the initiatives put forward in the Paper are fully aligned with the tenets of the CARICOM Strategic Plan and are also in furtherance of the Strategic Plan for Tourism Services;

Recognising the opportunities and recommended strategies which can be put in place to address both immediate and long-term initiatives aimed at stimulating sustainable growth in tourism;

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Acknowledging the importance of a collective approach and continuous dialogue;

Also noting the call from the mainland CARICOM Member States that the Tourism product being marketed should also reflect more than the traditional sun, sea and beach but include, for example, the rainforest, mountains, flora and fauna;

Further noting the information shared by the Prime Minister of Jamaica that the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Conference on Sustainable Tourism will be hosted by Jamaica on 27-29 November 2017;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed to –

- (i) broaden engagement to all Caribbean countries, companies and multilateral organisations aimed at securing their input and support for a regional tourism marketing and development initiative as outlined in the Paper;
- (ii) the creation of an independent Public-Private Sector Governing Body to guide the development and management of a sustained regional tourism marketing and public relations effort;
- (iii) support, in principle, the creation of public-private sector funding streams to sustain a regional tourism marketing and development initiative, particularly initiatives targeted at the development of the Region's human capital;
- (iv) endorse the establishment of a challenge grant, seeded by the public and private sectors, to support implementation of short-term marketing initiatives;
- (v) fast-track adoption and implementation of travel facilitation measures to stimulate economic growth and specifically **to support** the following in the interim, pending the finalisation of the Multilateral Air Services Agreement (MASA):
 - (a) Establishment of one-stop security regime;
 - (b) Streamlining and harmonizing visa policies;
 - (c) Establishing single domestic space with full clearance only at first port of entry;

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- (d) Adopting a uniform E/D card;
- (e) Streamlining and harmonizing policies and procedures;
- (f) Increase use of Tourism Satellite Accounting as a means of informing policy decisions;

Also agreed that the Technical Working Group (TWG) would continue to advance the regional initiative and report to the Heads of Government and other regional stakeholders at the Twenty-Ninth Inter-Sessional Meeting in 2018;

Further agreed that the Region's eco-tourism destinations be included in any regional tourism marketing and public relations effort being developed;

Urged Member States to attend the UNWTO Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Jamaica in light of its alignment with its intention to highlight the Caribbean Region as a Tourism destination.

HGC/2017/38/10 CONSIDERATION OF THE WORK PLAN AND BUDGET FOR THE SINGLE ICT SPACE

Having considered *Paper HGC/2017/38/10 entitled "Consideration of the Work Plan and Budget for the Single ICT Space"*;

Recalling its mandate for the development of an Integrated Work Plan and Budget for the CARICOM Single ICT Space for its consideration;

Noting that the Integrated Work Plan and indicative Budget have been endorsed and recommended for approval by the COTED (ICT) and that the Integrated Work Plan identifies the environmental assessment as a priority initiative that will provide significant contribution to the outcomes of the Single ICT Space;

Also noting that the ongoing development and implementation of the Plan will be influenced by collaborative engagement with regional and international agencies and commissions;

THE CONFERENCE:

Approved the integrated Work Plan and indicative Budget for the Single ICT Space;

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Requested that the CARICOM Secretariat engage other development partners with urgency, for sourcing of funds for the environmental assessment to determine the state of the ICT sector, and to conduct the requisite gap analysis to ensure effective allocation of resources.

HGC/2017/38/11 CARICOM HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT 2030 STRATEGY

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/11 entitled “*CARICOM Human Resource Development 2030 Strategy*”

Recalling the mandate of the Twenty-Fifth Inter-Sessional Meeting for the Development of a CARICOM Human Resource Development (HRD) 2030 Strategy;

Recognising that the broad-based Commission on HRD established by the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) and financed by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) had, between 2015-2017, developed the CARICOM HRD 2030 Strategy;

Cognisant that the requirements for the development of a 21st Century Knowledge Economy and Society driven by technology and, in particular, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), necessitated strategic shifts in HRD in order to enhance prospects for sustainable growth and development in CARICOM;

Also cognisant that the CARICOM HRD 2030 Strategy sought to address the core issues of access, equity, relevance, and quality in provision in HRD at all levels, including in ‘lifelong learning’;

Conscious of the critical importance of ensuring the relevance and application of skills to the emerging requirements of employment, society and the personal sphere;

Also recognising that the COHSOD had considered and approved the HRD 2030 Strategy, and had identified priority areas for implementation;

Noting the information from the Vice-Chancellor, The University of the West Indies (The UWI) on work being done by the World Bank on Centres of Excellence, and his request for the ‘no objection’ of the Conference for The UWI to lead discussions with the World Bank in support of the Establishment of such Centres in the Caribbean;

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THE CONFERENCE:

Commended the Chairman, Hon. Shawn Richards, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, St. Kitts and Nevis and the members of the HRD Commission for their excellent work in the development of a robust HRD Strategy to guide critical transformations in the Region;

Expressed appreciation to the CDB for its financial and technical support for the development of the Strategy and Action Plan;

Endorsed the CARICOM HRD 2030 Strategy;

Committed to active participation in the Implementation of the Strategy;

Provided its 'no objection' to The UWI engaging the World Bank in discussions on Centres of Excellence.

HGC/2017/38/12	PORT-OF-SPAIN DECLARATION +10 - "UNITING TO STOP THE EPIDEMIC OF NON- COMMUNICABLE DISEASES"
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Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/12 entitled "Port-of-Spain Declaration + 10 - Uniting to Stop the Epidemic of Non-Communicable Diseases";

Noting the need to adopt inter-sectoral approaches to address current health challenges;

Endorsing the need to reinstitute or strengthen the operation of the National COHSODs to implement the social sector strategies such as CCH and the HRD Strategy;

Recognising the urgency to redouble efforts to promote Physical Education in schools;

Reiterating the commitment to support enhanced public education to achieve societal recognition of the excessive amounts of sugars and salt found in processed and ultra-processed food and drink products along with their associated health risks;

DECISIONS

THE CONFERENCE:

Endorsed the strategic pillars of the CCH IV Strategy;

Supported the need for enhanced governance of the Strategy and urged the provision of additional resources for both the national and regional level governance structures;

Also supported the strengthening of the domestic food production along with the promotion and consumption of fresh indigenous foods where appropriate;

Urged that the implementation of health taxes be strongly considered where these were not yet in place;

Further supported the use of the tagline “*CARICOM: A Region Free of Tobacco Smoke by 2022*” at regional and national levels, which all government departments, civil society organisations and private sector businesses would be encouraged to use.

HGC/2017/38/13	REPARATIONS FOR NATIVE GENOCIDE AND SLAVERY
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Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/13 entitled “*Reparations for Native Genocide and Slavery*” which provided a status Report from the Chairman of the CARICOM Reparations Commission (CRC) on the work of the Commission;

Noting the status Report on the work of the CRC from the Chairman of the Commission;

Also noting that responses to the letter sent by the Chairman of the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee (PMSC) on Reparations had been received from all European recipients with the exception of Portugal;

THE CONFERENCE:

Requested the CRC, in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat, to prepare draft letters to the European Heads of Government, incorporating the specificities of the claim against each State, for the consideration of the PMSC on Reparations prior to review by Heads of Government of the Community;

Mandated the CRC, in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat, to coordinate the preparation of a strategy that includes diplomatic, media and messaging, and legal approaches to advance the Reparations claim for consideration by the PMSC on Reparations;

DECISIONS

Also mandated the Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR), with the active engagement of CARICOM diplomatic missions, to develop a diplomatic strategy to sensitise relevant inter-governmental fora, including but not limited to the United Nations (UN), Commonwealth, European Union (EU), African Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and Third States on the issue;

Also requested Belize, Grenada, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago to provide updates on the status of the functioning and/or plans for the establishment of their national committees on Reparations;

Urged Member States, which had not already done so, to remit their contributions to the Regional Budget for Reparations and for resolving the Leigh Day payment issue;

Encouraged Member States to develop national programmes of activities to mark the International Decade for People of African Descent, including public engagement on Reparations.

HGC/2017/38/14 CARICOM SMALL STATES – OPPORTUNITIES FOR FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/14 entitled “*CARICOM Small States – Opportunities for Financing for Development*” and received a presentation from Mr. Jorge Familiar, Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean, World Bank;

Welcoming the assumption as Chairman of the Small States Forum by the Honourable Prime Minister of Grenada and acknowledging that the Caribbean's chairmanship of the Small States Forum represents an opportunity to address the issues relating to greater access to public and private sector financing, including through proposals for innovative modalities, instruments and technologies;

Noting the confluence of the “*triple trap*” of (a) climate impacts; (b) high fossil fuel importation costs; and (c) high levels of indebtedness which constrain the economic resilience of CARICOM States and the call by the Honourable Prime Minister of Grenada for special attention to be paid to the blue economy, renewable energy and technology;

Also welcoming the World Bank Group's reiteration of its continued and deep commitment to work as partners to support CARICOM national and regional priorities;

DECISIONS

Acknowledging that –

- (i) CARICOM States could find new sources of growth by transitioning to a blue economy and that the World Bank could assist by leveraging new sources of financing in the pursuit of inclusive and sustainable growth;
- (ii) an appropriate transition strategy would involve –
 - (a) the identification, valuation and mapping of ocean assets to better manage ocean wealth through the development and application of smart policies;
 - (b) the deepening of regional integration and cooperation as essential to driving economic growth through the Caribbean Sea given the trans-boundary nature of many ocean assets;
 - (c) promoting private sector investments in the blue economy by creating an enabling environment for competitive ocean industries;

Also acknowledging –

- (i) the increase of US\$25 billion in the IDA-18 resources thereby making available a total envelope of US\$1.1 billion to Small States;
- (ii) that with effect from 1 July, US\$630 million in IDA-18 resources would be available to six (6) eligible CARICOM States, thereby providing a unique opportunity to earmark funds in support of regional and national priorities;

Commending the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for the work already done in assisting the Member States in the preparation of projects in order to enable access to resources from the Green Climate Fund (GCF);

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed that the Community would undertake the preparation of a comprehensive Strategic Paper on issues pertinent to Small States development financing for submission to the World Bank “*Small States Forum*” in October 2017 and which could be submitted for access to available resources under various initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund. The Strategic Paper would include a prospectus of transformative development projects and programmes such as initiatives relating to the Single ICT space and regional statistics development;

DECISIONS

Invited the active participation of all Member States in this exercise;

Also agreed -

- (i) to urgently expedite the selection of their National Implementing Entities (NIEs), to initiate the capacity building that would be required to get them accredited to the GCF;
- (ii) to appoint dedicated staff to their National Designated Authority so that they could undertake the relevant readiness functions, such as developing the country programmes, liaising with relevant stakeholders, identifying priority projects and develop project pipelines and support NIE capacity building;

Further agreed that Member States would seek to articulate coordinated positions on development financing starting at the upcoming meetings at the United Nations (UN) and during the IMF-World Bank Annual Meeting including during the Small States Forum in October 2017.

HGC/2017/38/15 REGIONAL PLAN FOR STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT

Having reviewed Paper HGC/2017/38/15 entitled “Regional Plan for Statistics Development”;

THE CONFERENCE:

Endorsed the preparation of the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) relative to its strategic role in strengthening statistics and improving its availability for evidence-based decision-making, insofar as it related to –

- (i) responding to the statistical requirements of the regional development agenda;
- (ii) assuring comparability of data in all Member States;
- (iii) strengthening links and convergence between the regional and national levels;
- (iv) pooling statistical skills, expertise and resources at the regional level;
- (v) enabling the development of statistical tools and services at the regional level;
- (vi) facilitating, coordinating and strengthening representation with respect to external partners;
- (vii) highlighting South-South cooperation as a means of strengthening statistical capacity;
- (viii) serving as a framework for the implementation and monitoring of the Agenda 2030 at the regional level;
- (ix) adding value through the more efficient use of resources in the production of harmonised intra-regional statistics;

DECISIONS

Agreed that the Budget for statistical development would be developed once the RSDS was formulated;

Also agreed that interim measures be put in place - through direct funding by Governments or through approaches to International Development Partners (IDPs) - to provide the requisite resources to '*build out*' the national and regional aspects of the RSDS.

HGC/2017/38/16 BORDER ISSUES

➤ **Belize-Guatemala Relations**

Having considered in Caucus the information presented by the Belize representative on its border relations with Guatemala;

Noting Belize's appreciation for the continued support of CARICOM on this issue;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed to issue the following Statement -

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

Heads of Government recalled that both Belize and Guatemala have now completed their internal procedures required for the Special agreement to submit Guatemala's Claim to the International Court of Justice of 2008, including its related Protocol of 2015, to enable these Agreements to come into force and that the two countries have exchanged notes in this respect.

They expressed their hope that both countries can proceed with the required referendum as early as possible.

Heads of Government noted, with regret, that the undertaking by both countries and the Organisation of American States (OAS), to engage in the design and development of a mechanism of co-operation for the Sarstoon River, remains outstanding and urged both countries and the OAS to redouble their efforts in this respect.

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

DECISIONS

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

➤ **Guyana - Venezuela Relations**

Having considered in Caucus the information presented by the President of Guyana on its border relations with Venezuela;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed to issue the following Statement -

The Heads of Government received an update from the President of Guyana on recent developments on the controversy between the cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the efforts of United Nations Secretary General, His Excellency Antonio Guterres, to find a final and binding solution.

The Heads welcomed the appointment of His Excellency Dag Nylander as Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General in the Good Offices Process for the duration of 2017, with a strengthened mandate of mediation. They noted that *"if by the end of 2017, the Secretary General concludes that significant progress has not been made toward arriving at a full agreement for the solution of the controversy, he will choose the International Court of Justice as the next means of settlement"*, unless the Governments of Guyana and Venezuela *"jointly request that he refrain from doing so"*. The Heads recognised the strong commitment of the Secretary General to the process and joined Guyana in acknowledging his efforts.

The Heads of Government reiterated the firm and unequivocal support of the Caribbean Community for the maintenance and preservation of Guyana's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

DECISIONS

HGC/2017/38/17 **PROPOSAL BY THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (UNECLAC) FOR DEBT RELIEF WITHIN THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY**

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/17 entitled, *“Proposal by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) for Debt Relief within the Caribbean Community”*;

THE CONFERENCE:

Considered the proposal on “Debt for Climate Adaptation Swaps” presented by UNECLAC;

Recommended that the proposal be forwarded to the Council for Finance and Planning (COFAP), which should meet **by 30 November 2017**, for further distillation of the initiative;

Requested that the COFAP prepare a report of its deliberations for the consideration of Heads at the Twenty-Ninth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community to be held in 2018.

HGC/2017/38/18 **TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO-CHILE PARTIAL SCOPE AGREEMENT**

Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/18 entitled *“Trinidad and Tobago-Chile Partial Scope Agreement”*;

Noting that Trinidad and Tobago commenced exploratory discussions towards a Partial Scope Trade Agreement with Chile in April 2010;

Acknowledging Trinidad and Tobago's intention to proceed with re-negotiations with Chile for a Partial Scope Agreement;

Recognising the importance to Trinidad and Tobago of an Agreement with Chile;

DECISIONS

Also recognising that Article 80(3) and (4) of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas provides that bilateral agreements negotiated by Member States be subject to certification by the Secretariat prior to their conclusion; and approval by the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) where tariff concessions are involved;

Also noting that the Recommendations of the Committee of Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) on the Risk Assessment on poultry and pork products from Chile would be submitted for the approval of the Forty-Fifth Meeting of the COTED;

THE CONFERENCE:

Requested that Trinidad and Tobago notify the Forty-Fifth Meeting of the COTED of its re-engagement in negotiations for a Partial Scope Agreement and that it was desirous of expediting the process to allow importation of meat products from Chile.

HGC/2017/38/19	COLONIAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY/BRITISH AMERICAN INSURANCE COMPANY (CLICO/BAICO)
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Having considered in Caucus Paper HGC/2017/38/19 entitled “Colonial Life Insurance Company/British American Insurance Company (CLICO/BAICO) - *Background Note Prepared by the CARICOM Secretariat*” and the issues relating to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) requesting payments under an agreement struck with Trinidad and Tobago in relation to the financial collapse of the CL Financial Group;

Noting the information provided by Trinidad and Tobago in respect of potential litigation proceedings between the Government and CLICO whereby the *locus standi* of the State is being challenged by the CLICO interests and a legal demand for the immediate withdrawal of Government directors from the Board of the Entity;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed that bilateral discussions would be continued between the affected Member States.

DECISIONS

HGC/2017/38/20	ROTATION OF CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE (January 2018 to June 2025)
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Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/20 entitled "Rotation of Chairmanship of the Conference (January 2018 to June 2025)";

THE CONFERENCE:

Approved the Rotation Schedule for the Chairmanship of the Conference for the period 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2025, as set out **overleaf**.

**Thirty-Eighth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government
of the Caribbean Community, St. George's, Grenada, 4-6 July 2017**

DECISIONS

ROTATION SCHEDULE FOR THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE 1 JANUARY 2018 TO 30 JUNE 2025¹				
PERIOD	INCOMING	INCUMBENT	OUTGOING	MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE DURING CHAIRMANSHIP
1 January to 30 June 2018	Jamaica	Haiti	Grenada	Inter-Sessional
1 July 2018 to 31 December 2018	St Kitts and Nevis	Jamaica	Haiti	Regular
1 January to 30 June 2019	Saint Lucia	St Kitts and Nevis	Jamaica	Inter-Sessional
1 July to 31 December 2019	Suriname	Saint Lucia	St Kitts and Nevis	Regular
1 January to 30 June 2020	St Vincent and the Grenadines	Suriname	Saint Lucia	Inter-Sessional
1 July to 31 December 2020	Trinidad and Tobago	St Vincent and the Grenadines	Suriname	Regular
1 January to 30 June 2021	Antigua and Barbuda	Trinidad and Tobago	St Vincent and the Grenadines	Inter-Sessional
1 July to 31 December 2021	The Bahamas	Antigua and Barbuda	Trinidad and Tobago	Regular
1 January to 30 June 2022	Barbados	The Bahamas	Antigua and Barbuda	Inter-Sessional
1 July to 31 December 2022	Belize	Barbados	The Bahamas	Regular
1 January to 30 June 2023	Dominica	Belize	Barbados	Inter-Sessional
1 July to 31 December 2023	Guyana	Dominica	Belize	Regular
1 January to 30 June 2024	Grenada	Guyana	Dominica	Inter-Sessional
1 July to 31 December 2024	Haiti	Grenada	Guyana	Regular
1 January to 30 June 2025	Jamaica	Haiti	Grenada	Inter-Sessional

¹ Ensuring MDC and LDC representation during each rotation period.

DECISIONS

HGC/2017/38/22	DATE OF THE TWENTY-NINTH INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE (Haiti, February 2018)
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THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed that the Twenty-Ninth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference would be held in Haiti, on 26-27 February 2018, to be confirmed with Haiti.

HGC/2017/38/23	RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SURINAME
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Having received in Caucus an update on the situation in Suriname from the Head of Delegation of Suriname and noting that this was an internal matter to Suriname;

THE CONFERENCE:

Noted the information provided on the matter.

HGC/2017/38/24	UPDATE ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE ACP/EU NEGOTIATIONS FOR A SUCCESSOR ARRANGEMENT TO THE COTONOU PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
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Having considered Paper HGC/2017/38/24.1 entitled *“Update on Preparations for the ACP/EU Negotiations for a Successor Arrangement to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement”*;

Recalling its decision taken at the Twenty-Eighth Inter-Sessional Meeting on the Future of the Cotonou Agreement and the ACP Group;

Noting the Meeting between CARIFORUM Ministers and the EU Commissioner for Development which was held in Cancun, Mexico on 22 June 2017;

Taking into account the discussions in the consideration of this Item;

THE CONFERENCE:

Noted the presentation made by Jamaica on the Post-Cotonou Partnership and the future of the ACP;

DECISIONS

Also noted the discussions held at the 42nd Joint ACP-EU Council of Ministers in May 2017, during which the ACP elaborated on its actions taken to date, including the preparation of a roadmap in anticipation of negotiations with the EU for a new Agreement post-2020;

Reiterated that the successor agreement should maintain the core geographic and geo-political character of the ACP Group's six Regions, having due regard for the specificities of each Region, and all countries benefitting from the partnership;

Emphasised the importance of seeking to maintain the all-ACP umbrella in the upcoming negotiations in the EU;

Agreed that CARICOM should remain actively engaged in the discussions within the CARIFORUM, ACP and ACP-EU constructs to ensure a positive, development-oriented outcome for the Region;

Reaffirmed CARICOM's commitment to supporting efforts being undertaken within CARIFORUM and the wider ACP Group of States to ensure the Region's readiness for the negotiations on its future engagement within an ACP and an ACP-EU context, taking account of the core issues of graduation/differentiation, EPA implementation, trade and development, climate change, sustainable development and the SDG Goals, *inter alia*;

Also reiterated the need to continue to engage with the Dominican Republic within CARIFORUM in elaborating the Region's strategic approach going forward;

Recalled that Cuba was a member of CARIFORUM and could participate in the post-Cotonou partnership arrangement;

Recognised the need to monitor closely proposals and developments relating to enlargement of the ACP Group of States;

Also agreed that consultations which would bring together all stakeholders to discuss the Region's positions would be convened before the start of negotiations;

Further agreed that this be a recurring item on the agenda of the Conference, including Inter-Sessional meetings, until the conclusion of the ACP/EU negotiations in 2019; and

Agreed on the importance of political/diplomatic engagement at the highest level in support of the negotiations on the post-Cotonou arrangements.

DECISIONS

**HGC/2017/38/25 REQUEST FOR INTERPRETATION AND
TRANSLATION SERVICES FOR MEETINGS OF THE
ORGANS OF THE COMMUNITY**

Having considered in Caucus a request from the President of Haiti for French to be an official language of the Community and that provision be made in the CARICOM Secretariat's budget or through donor funding for financing of interpretation in the French Language;

Noting the position of Suriname that similar accommodation would also need to be made for the Dutch language;

Cognizant of the costs of French and Dutch as official languages at meetings of the Conference and Councils of the Community;

THE CONFERENCE:

Reiterated that English remains the official language of the Community;

Mandated the Secretariat to research the cost of providing interpretation into French and Dutch as working languages. In doing so, the Secretariat should consult with Canada, France, and La Francophonie;

Agreed that Haiti would assist the Secretariat in identifying possible sources of funding.

HGC/2017/38/26 SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

Having discussed this Item in Caucus;

THE CONFERENCE:

Approved the following Statement on the Situation in Venezuela

DECISIONS

Statement on the Situation in Venezuela

CARICOM Heads of Government, meeting in Conference in Grenada on 4-6 July 2017, discussed the serious challenges facing Venezuela and its people. They reaffirmed their guiding principles of adherence to the rule of law, respect for human rights and democracy, as well as for the fundamental principles of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

Concerned with the difficult political, economic and social situation in Venezuela, in particular the increase in violence and polarization between the Government and the Opposition, and its effect on the people of Venezuela, and recognizing the urgent need to find a solution to the present situation, and that this had to be sought internally, CARICOM Heads of Government called for all parties to commit to engage in renewed dialogue and negotiation leading to a comprehensive political agreement with established time tables, concrete actions and guarantees to ensure its implementation for the well-being of the nation. In this regard, CARICOM Heads of Government offered their good offices to facilitate this dialogue.

CARICOM Heads of Government mandated the Chairman of the Conference to communicate with the parties concerned in Venezuela about this offer.

HGC/2017/38/27 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

HGC/2017/38/27.1 *Proposed Pension Payment to Secretaries-General*

Having considered this Item in Caucus;

THE CONFERENCE:

Adopted the decision arising from the discussion in Caucus;

Mandated the Chairman of the Conference to pursue the necessary action.

DECISIONS

HGC/2017/38/27.2 Youth Engagement and Sport as a Tool for Development

Having noted the presentation made by the Suriname representative on the issue;

THE CONFERENCE:

Requested the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) to consider the issues of youth engagement and sports as a tool for development and make recommendations to the Conference.

HGC/2017/38/27.3 Crime and Violence

Having received a submission from the Prime Minister of Jamaica concerning the escalating crime and violence in the Region and its deleterious impact on societies;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed to table for the consideration of the Twenty-Ninth Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference, in Haiti in 2018, an item on Crime and Violence, as distinct from Regional Security;

Also agreed that Jamaica would submit an Annotation on this issue to the Secretariat.

HGC/2017/38/27.4 Upcoming CELAC Summits

Having received a submission from the Barbados representative regarding the upcoming European Union - Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (EU-CELAC) Summit, 26-27 October 2017, in El Salvador, and the CELAC Summit in January 2018, also in El Salvador;

THE CONFERENCE:

Encouraged Member States to participate in these Summits given their importance to the Region;

Emphasised the need for the Region to meet to discuss critical issues, prior to the Summits;

Requested the Secretariat to coordinate the arrangements for the regional dialogue.