



# **FORTY-FIRST REGULAR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**



## **DECISIONS**



### **CHAIRMAN**

**Dr. the Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves  
Prime Minister  
St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

### **VENUE AND DATE**

**Videoconference  
29 October 2020**

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat

Turkeyen

P.O. Box 10827

Georgetown

Guyana

Tel: (592) 222 0001-0006

Fax: (592) 222 0170/71

E-mail: [documentation.centre@caricom.org](mailto:documentation.centre@caricom.org)

URL: <http://www.caricom.org>

ISBN 978-976-600-492-7 (E-book)

© 2021 Caribbean Community Secretariat

*Permission is granted for the reprinting of any material in this manual subject to due acknowledgement of the source.*

Printed in Guyana

**Forty-First Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the  
Caribbean Community (CARICOM) – Videoconference, 29 October 2020**

**DECISIONS**

---

[Table of Contents](#)

HGC/2020/41/5	COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGION:.....	1
HGC/2020/41/5.1	Implications of the Pandemic for the Health of the Region .....	1
➤	With respect to the CARICOM Travel Bubble .....	3
➤	With respect to the COVAX Facility: Overview, Financing and Rollout ....	3
HGC/2020/41/5.2	CARICOM (Regional) Financial and Economic Developments .....	4
HGC/2020/41/6.	CARIBBEAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND TRANSFORMATION (CERT) .....	5
HGC/2020/41/7	A JOINT TOURISM POLICY FOR CARICOM.....	6
HGC/2020/41/8	BLACKLISTING .....	7
HGC/2020/41/9	ISSUES RELATED TO THE CARICOM PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATION (CPSO): ..	10
HGC/2020/41/9.1	Designation of the CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO) as an Associate Institution.....	10
HGC/2020/41/9.2	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Caribbean Community and the CARICOM Private Sector Organization Inc. ....	10
HGC/2020/41/10	SECURITY ISSUES.....	11
HGC/2020/41/12	BORDER ISSUES.....	11
➤	Belize-Guatemala Relations.....	11
➤	Guyana-Venezuela Relations .....	12
HGC/2020/41/13	EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH SPECIAL GUEST .....	13
➤	His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations ...	13
HGC/2020/41/14	DATE AND VENUE – THIRTY-SECOND INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, FEBRUARY 2021 .....	13



**HGC/2020/41/5 COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE REGION:**

**HGC/2020/41/5.1 Implications of the Pandemic for the Health of the Region**

*Having considered Paper HGC/2020/41/5.1 entitled “COVID-19 and its Impact on the Region: Implications of the Pandemic for the Health of the Region”;*

*Commending the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) for its on-going leadership and support to Member States in responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic;*

*Mindful, however, of the different phases which individual countries may be experiencing and the capacities and resources available;*

*Also mindful of the impact of COVID-19 on several sectors in Member States, including health, education, security and law enforcement;*

*Recognising the support provided by International Development Partners (IDPs);*

*Further mindful that, in the absence of a vaccine, COVID-19 will continue to be a grave public health, security, and economic threat, and a whole-of-government approach must continue to be taken to manage the ongoing threats;*

*Acknowledging that the Region’s success in containing the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 is as a result of the two major approaches taken, namely: (i) the regional public health approach; and (ii) activation of the principles of functional cooperation, one of the core principles of regional integration;*

*Conscious that Member States must be prepared to successfully manage and reduce the effects and impact of COVID-19 until a vaccine or treatment protocol is identified in the foreseeable future;*

*Cognisant that successfully managing and reducing the effects and impact of COVID-19 will require continued inter- and intra-regional solidarity to mitigate further economic and social erosion, and safeguard the health, safety and security of our Region;*

DECISIONS

---

**Also recognising** that re-opening and recovery require a careful balance between reducing restrictive measures and ensuring adequate measures are implemented to reduce importation and spread of new cases;

**Recalling** the Decision of the Conference of Heads of Government taken at its Twelfth Special Emergency Meeting (September 2020), to create a CARICOM Travel Bubble;

**Also cognisant** of the need to ensure the integrity of the Travel Bubble;

**Further recognising** the need to provide CARPHA with the data on testing outcomes of travellers, including that of their own nationals (i.e., daily cases of COVID-19) which will allow CARPHA to carry out the necessary analysis to inform categorization of countries (low-risk, medium-risk, high-risk);

**Recognising** that the COVAX Facility is an initiative to secure access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and will afford countries the best opportunity to fast-track access to COVID-19 vaccines;

**Also recognising** that all vaccines available for purchase through the Facility will have received World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Use Listing or prequalification, or been approved by a stringent regulatory authority;

**Further cognisant** that six (6) CARICOM Member States have been identified for Advance Market Commitment - a financing instrument to support the procurement of vaccines for low and middle-income economies and that the remaining Member States that have committed to the COVAX Facility, as self-financing countries, are expected to deposit a fifteen percent (15%) down payment;

**Also acknowledging** that the European Union (EU) grant of 3 million Euros to CARPHA which will be channeled through the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to support the self-financing for Member States that have committed to the COVAX Facility will only partially cover the fifteen percent (15%) down payment in support of Member States which have committed to the COVAX Facility and that once available, PAHO Member States can utilize the Revolving Fund to purchase vaccines;

*Mindful that WHO/PAHO have developed tools and modeling frameworks to guide nationally on the prioritisation of groups for vaccination and for estimating the number and percentage of the population at increased risk and high risk of severe COVID-19 disease;*

**THE CONFERENCE:**

***With respect to the CARICOM Travel Bubble,***

**Mandated** CARPHA to convene a meeting of the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) to prepare common technical standards for travel -

- (i) within the CARICOM Bubble;
- (ii) from non-Bubble countries to the Bubble countries; and
- (iii) from third countries to the Region;

and to report back to the Secretariat within forty-eight (48) hours;

**Agreed** that the Conference would meet immediately thereafter to review the standards proposed;

***With respect to the COVAX Facility: Overview, Financing and Rollout,***

**Expressed appreciation** to the European Union (EU), CARPHA and PAHO for their support in facilitating the down payment for self-financing Member States;

**Mandated** CARPHA to explore, in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat and PAHO, other financing options/mechanisms to cover additional costs for the vaccines;

**Agreed** that Member States should make use of the expertise and tools developed by PAHO to guide the prioritisation of groups for vaccination and support countries in estimating the number and percentage of the population at increased risk and high-risk of severe COVID-19 disease<sup>1</sup>;

---

<sup>1</sup> Severe COVID-19 is a severe acute respiratory illness presenting fever and at least one sign/symptom of respiratory disease (e.g. cough, shortness of breath), and requiring hospitalisation. Population at increased risk of severe COVID-19 include those with at least one underlying health condition. Population at high risk of severe COVID-19 include those that would require hospitalisation if infected.

DECISIONS

---

**Also agreed** that countries should ensure that adequate mechanisms are in place to provide oversight and facilitate the safe and efficacious use of any future vaccines that become available;

**Also mandated** the CARICOM Secretariat, in collaboration with CARPHA and PAHO, to facilitate the establishment/strengthening of existing regulatory mechanisms at the regional and national levels to manage new and emerging therapeutics, including the reporting and investigation of any adverse events associated with their use;

**Further agreed** that the Chairman of the Conference would write to the World Bank and the Chairman of the Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (GAVI) as a matter of urgency, to draw attention to the disadvantages faced by Member States based on the inequitable criteria of per capita income being used to determine access to vaccines and to urge their review; the letter should be copied to the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN).

***HGC/2020/41/5.2 CARICOM (Regional) Financial and Economic Developments***

***Having received in Caucus Paper HGC/2020/41/5.2 entitled “CARICOM (Regional) Financial and Economic Developments”;***

**THE CONFERENCE:**

**Noted** the Paper and **agreed** that it would consider the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) issues at its next meeting;

**Also noted** that the Prime Minister of Grenada would circulate through the Secretariat for the attention of Member States for endorsement, a Paper on ***“Implementation of the CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) in Relation to Measuring the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)”***, and his presentation and recommendations on Information, Communications and Technologies (ICT) to the Meeting.



**HGC/2020/41/6. CARIBBEAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND  
TRANSFORMATION (CERT)**

*Having considered Paper HGC/2020/41/6 entitled “Caribbean Economic Recovery and Transformation (CERT)”; and 6 Add entitled “Report of the CARICOM Commission on the Economy (CCE)”;*

**Noting -**

- (i) the events described in the introduction regarding the impact of COVID and the approach needed to deal with the financing needs of the Region;*
- (ii) the conceptual approach to the CERT;*
- (iii) the approach adopted with the banks and consensus between the banks and the Central Banks on the financial sector measures to support the revitalization of regional economies;*

**THE CONFERENCE:**

**Supported** the continual lobbying at the international level for an increase in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) allocation;

**Called** for the refinancing of COVID-19 related debt into long-term instruments with fixed lower interest rates and long moratorium of seven (7) to ten (10) years;

**Agreed** to -

- (i) constitute a small working committee comprising Barbados (Chairperson), Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), to engage the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) on behalf of the Region, and to report to the Special Meeting of the Conference in three (3) weeks;
- (ii) the development of country-specific internally consistent policy frameworks along the lines of: Dimension 1 - Dealing with the Immediate Financial Needs; and Dimension 2 - Medium-Term Investment in Resilience Growth;

**Also agreed** to the development and use of a Universal Vulnerability Index (UVI) and would, specifically:

- (i) **take** the lead in supporting the establishment of an international working group/expert committee, including all relevant international and regional organisations, to advance the technical work of developing a sound UVI;
- (ii) **establish** an action plan to pursue high-level diplomatic demarches to the IFIs, developed partner nations, small states and other developing countries to advocate for the UVI; solicit their full engagement on the issue; and promote its acceptance;

**Mandated** the Secretariat to –

- : **identify** a list of products (agricultural and non-agricultural) in which there is existing regional capacity, with a view to subsequently determining additional measures necessary for the protection of Member States' balance of payments and expanding that existing production capacity for at least the next two (2) years.

**HGC/2020/41/7**

## **A JOINT TOURISM POLICY FOR CARICOM**

*Having considered Paper HGC/2020/41/7 entitled "A Joint Tourism Policy for CARICOM";*

*Recognising that mobilisation of funding for Tourism could effectively be linked to Climate Change funding initiatives;*

### **THE CONFERENCE:**

**Agreed** to the development, in collaboration with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) by 31 December 2020, of a Joint Tourism Policy for CARICOM which -

- (i) consolidates progress made to 2018 and incorporates the Region's new realities related to resilience-building and the regional response to COVID-19 and similar adverse events;

DECISIONS

---

- (ii) focuses on key issues aimed at rebuilding and recovery of Caribbean Tourism;

**Also agreed** that the development of the Policy is to be led by the Interim Tourism Working Group (ITWG) and to include representation from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission;

**Further agreed** that further consideration be given to the proposal for -

- (i) a levy on air transportation of US\$2 per passenger traveling from outside the Region to participating countries, for implementation from 1 April 2021, to support the regional marketing initiative and the work of the Caribbean Coalition of Tourism (CCT);
- (ii) funds so derived to be deposited into a specially designated marketing fund account that would also provide for the establishment of a Tourism Promotion Reserve Fund for Brand Protection and administered by the CCT;

**Mandated** that the ITWG also report on potential funding opportunities and mechanisms to enable implementation of other critical aspects of the Joint Tourism Policy for CARICOM, for presentation at the Forty-Second Regular Meeting of the Conference in July 2021;

**Agreed** that a Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee (PMSC) on Tourism, comprising The Bahamas as Chair, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica, and Saint Lucia, be established to provide political oversight for the preparation of the Joint Tourism Policy and other related matters.

## HGC/2020/41/8

## BLACKLISTING

*Having considered Paper HGC/2020/41/8 entitled “Blacklisting”;*

*Acknowledging that several Member States have been included in European Union (EU) blacklists published in May and October 2020 with respect to –*

- (i) *Non-cooperative tax jurisdictions;*

DECISIONS

---

- (ii) *High Risk Third Countries with Strategic Anti-Money Laundering/ Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Deficiencies;*

**Also acknowledging** that –

- (i) *Member States need to be prepared for the eventuality that EU Member States having made the commitment to do so, will begin to apply at least one administrative or legislative defensive measure against countries listed as non-cooperative tax jurisdictions from **1 January 2021**;*
- (ii) *under the recently published Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/855, European Member States would be able to apply new **protective measures**, namely -*
- (a) *enhanced customer due diligence measures when having a business relationship or transaction involving high-risk third countries;*
- (b) *prohibition on EU persons and entities from implementing financial instruments or budgetary guarantees or from entering into new or renewed operations with entities incorporated or established in jurisdictions identified as high-risk third countries;*

**Noting** that countries entering the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force/Financial Action Task Force (CFATF/FATF) International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) process are all at risk of being selected by the European Commission (EC) for inclusion on the blacklist of High Risk Third Countries with Strategic AML/CFT Deficiencies;

**Recognising** that the Europeans have stepped up the economic assault on Small States in the midst of a Pandemic when international organisations like the FATF have postponed work plans because of border closures and social distancing protocols, thereby allowing States to concentrate on mitigating the health and economic crises;

**Also noting** that the Community should treat the EU's blacklisting strategy as severely inimical to the development of the Region and that it would be necessary to seek common cause with a political coalition of the willing to overcome this challenge;

*Also recognising that the Community needs to use the opportunity to build strong strategic alliances with institutions like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations (UN), in pursuit of direct interventions at the highest level of the European power structure;*

**THE CONFERENCE:**

**Agreed** to support a high-level engagement with the OECD, including an interaction between Ministers of Finance and the Head of the OECD Centre of Tax Administration and Policy;

**Also agreed** to -

- (i) establish a *‘Political Coalition of the Willing’* comprising CARICOM Member States and other affected States, as well as within the context of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) to challenge the EU;
- (ii) forge strategic alliances with the OECD, IMF, the UN and other international organisations to pursue direct interventions at the highest levels of the European political power structure;

**Further agreed** that as soon as the health crisis permits, Heads of Government and Ministers of Finance would embark on a series of visits to Brussels and other European States (Germany, Italy, among others) to engage with the Europeans on the challenges to Caribbean lives and livelihoods posed by the EU blacklisting strategy;

**Advised** Member States to be mindful of the enhanced technical rules being employed by the OECD and FATF, as well as the evolving assessment criteria and procedural changes at the level of the EU Code of Conduct Group (COCG) to avoid technical timing misalignments which could result in the re-listing of Member States;

**Welcomed** the offer by the Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados to share the legal opinion on the European blacklisting strategy prepared for the Government of Barbados;

**Agreed** that Member States so willing would engage a lobbyist (legal specialist) and **noted** that the following Member States and Associate Member - Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Bermuda, *inter alia*, have expressed their intention

DECISIONS

---

to join with Barbados to engage a premier legal strategist and lobbyist to advise on the actions to be taken to advance their cause against the EU's blacklisting strategy;

**Reiterated** the encouragement to Member States to prioritise the upgrading of their AML-CFT regime in accord with the FATF/CFATF standards, since such non-compliance was one of the criteria being applied by the EC in selecting countries for listing as high risk third countries due to strategic AML/CFT deficiencies.

**HGC/2020/41/9 ISSUES RELATED TO THE CARICOM PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATION (CPSO):**

**HGC/2020/41/9.1** *Designation of the CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO) as an Associate Institution*

**HGC/2020/41/9.2** *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Caribbean Community and the CARICOM Private Sector Organization Inc.*

*Having considered Paper HGC/2020/41/9 entitled "Issues Related to the CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO)", its Attachments, and the Presentation of the Chairman of the CPSO on the activities undertaken by the CPSO in support of regional integration;*

**THE CONFERENCE:**

**Designated** the CARICOM Private Sector Organization Inc., as an Associate Institution of the Community in accordance with Article 22 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas;

**Approved** the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Caribbean Community and the CARICOM Private Sector Organization Inc. concerning cooperation towards the further implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) for signature by the Secretary-General on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

## HGC/2020/41/10 SECURITY ISSUES

*Having considered in Caucus Paper HGC/2020/41/10 entitled “Security Issues”;*

### THE CONFERENCE:

**Mandated** the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) to meet as a matter of urgency to consider the issues presented to the Conference in the Security Brief;

**Agreed** to consider the recommendations of the CONSLE on these issues at the Thirty-Second Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference, to be held in February 2021;

**Urged** Member States to fulfil their financial obligations to the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS).

## HGC/2020/41/12 BORDER ISSUES:

### ➤ *Belize-Guatemala Relations*

*Having noted in Caucus Item 12 entitled “Border Issues” and the update provided by the Government of Belize on its border dispute with the Republic of Guatemala;*

*Also noting Belize’s appreciation for the continued support of CARICOM on the issue;*

### THE CONFERENCE:

**Agreed** to include the following Statement regarding this matter in the Communiqué emanating from its Forty-First Regular Meeting -

*“Heads of Government received an update on the most recent developments between Belize and Guatemala. They noted the extension of the time limits for the submission of the Memorials and the Counter Memorials to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) by Belize and Guatemala respectively. Heads of Government urged Belize, Guatemala and the Organization of American States (OAS) to continue implementing fully the Confidence Building Measures that have been in place since 2005, pending the resolution of Guatemala’s Claim at the ICJ.*”

DECISIONS

---

*Heads of Government noted that the undertaking by both countries and the OAS to engage in the design and development of a mechanism of co-operation for the Sarstoon River is still outstanding and called on both countries and the OAS to reinvigorate their efforts to this end.*

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

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

➤ **Guyana-Venezuela Relations**

*Having noted the update provided by the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana on the border controversy with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;*

*Also noting Guyana's appreciation for the continued support of CARICOM on this issue;*

**THE CONFERENCE:**

**Agreed** to include the following Statement regarding this matter in the Communiqué emanating from its Forty-First Regular Meeting -

*“Heads of Government noted that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held an Oral Hearing on Jurisdiction by ‘virtual’ process in the Case of Guyana v. Venezuela on 30 June 2020. A decision is awaited. If the Court affirms its jurisdiction, Guyana will proceed to the next stage of its pleadings as to why the 1899 Arbitral Award is the valid demarcation of the boundary between Guyana and Venezuela, thus providing for a final resolution of the controversy between the two countries as determined by the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN).*

*Heads of Government reiterated their full support for this judicial process that is intended to bring a peaceful and definitive end to the long-standing controversy between Guyana and Venezuela.*

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



**HGC/2020/41/13 EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH SPECIAL GUEST**

➤ *His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations*

**THE CONFERENCE:**

**Noted** the informative presentation made by His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), on issues of priority concern to the Community such as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Financing for Development, Debt, Climate Change and Sustainable Development;

**Also noted** the actions taken and proposals put forward by the UN in addressing these issues, including massive expansion of access to tests and treatments, and support to recovery efforts in developing countries through a relief package amounting to at least ten percent (10%) of the global economy;

**Welcomed** the ensuing fruitful exchange of views, in particular the Secretary-General's firm support of the need for urgent debt relief for the Community's Member States, and the United Nations' support for a multidimensional vulnerability index to determine concessional financing.

**HGC/2020/41/14 DATE AND VENUE – THIRTY-SECOND INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, FEBRUARY 2021**

**THE CONFERENCE:**

**Accepted** the offer of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to host the Thirty-Second Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference on **23-24 February 2021** in Trinidad and Tobago.

