



44th REGULAR MEETING OF
THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT
OF **CARICOM**
NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS | 15th - 17th FEBRUARY 2023



DOC # HGC/2023/44/CD

FORTY-FOURTH REGULAR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

**15-17 FEBRUARY 2023
NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS**

DECISIONS

CHAIRMAN

**HON PHILIP BRAVE DAVIS, KC
PRIME MINISTER
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
BAHAMAS**

DATE AND VENUE

15-17 February 2023

NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS

**Forty-Fourth Regular Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government
of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Nassau, The Bahamas, 15-17 February 2023**

DECISIONS

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of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Nassau, The Bahamas, 15-17 February 2023**

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HGC/2023/44/5 UPDATE ON COVID-19 AND OTHER EMERGING HEALTH ISSUES

***Having considered** Paper HGC/2023/44/5 entitled “Update on COVID 19 and other Emerging Health Issues”;*

***Being mindful** of CARPHA’s comprehensive response to COVID-19, Mpox and other regional health security threats including the re-emerging threat of Zika and the ongoing threat of Dengue and other Vector borne diseases, the low vaccine uptake, and the associated challenges of the regular expanded programme of immunization (EPI);*

***Also being mindful** of CARPHA’s support and advocacy for in-country implementation of proactive health measures for more robust health systems and public health workforce, stronger and better resourced national EPI programmes, healthier safer tourism recovery, and sustainability of Caribbean economies;*

***Being cognisant** of the beginning of the process which will lead to disbursement of the Pandemic Fund for individual or group submissions of Expressions of Interest to the first round of the Pandemic Fund process;*

***Recognising** the dangers of the low receipt of surveillance data from Member States in stymieing early detection and response to threats to the CARICOM region;*

***Cognisant** of the vulnerability of the Region to public health threats and emergencies and the benefits to be derived from the Pandemic Fund:*

***Recalling** the Port-of-Spain Declaration - “Uniting to stop the epidemic of chronic NCDs,” adopted by the Conference of Heads of Government at the Special Regional Summit on Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) on 15 September 2007;*

***Conscious** of the significant impact of NCDs on Health Systems of the region and the need to accelerate the implementation of the 2007 Port-of-Spain Declaration;*

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THE CONFERENCE:

Urged Member States to remain vigilant, continue to carry out active surveillance and promote the use of established prevention and control guidelines to curb further spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases;

Agreed that Member States would continue to support proactive health measures for safer, healthier, tourism recovery and sustainability of the Caribbean economies;

Strongly urged Caribbean countries to submit Expressions of Interest to access the Pandemic fund for individual or group submissions to the first round of the Pandemic Fund process;

Encouraged Member States to ensure the allocation of adequate in-country programme resources for Vector Control Programmes to abort/curtail the spread of Zika in the Region;

Also encouraged Member States to share country surveillance data with CARPHA to support early detection and response for emergencies for the CARICOM region in a timely manner;

Urged Member States to Support the Caribbean Moves Initiative in response to NCDs;

Also urged Member States to assess the status of implementation of the Port-of-Spain Declaration and identify high impact strategies to advance implementation;

Further urged Member States to invest in science and technology to improve the capacity of Member States to effectively manage and respond to pandemics.

DECISIONS

HGC/2023/44/6

REPORT FROM THE PRIME MINISTERIAL SUB-COMMITTEE (PMSC) ON THE CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME)

- Report from Honorable Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados and Lead Head of Government in the CARICOM Quasi-Cabinet with responsibility for Single Market and Economy, including Monetary Union

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/6 entitled “Report from the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee (PMSC) on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) - Approval of an amendment on the Regional Treaty on (to treat with) Mergers and Acquisitions;

Noting the presentation of the Chair of the PMSC on the CSME on the state of the CSME and the slow development and implementation of crucial aspects of the CSME;

Acknowledging that the COVID-19 Pandemic had delayed progress on the roll-out of the CSME and that it is imperative that the Community recalibrates and accelerates implementation of critical initiatives;

Cognisant that some Member States are continuing their internal consultations and the policy approval process for the treatment of mergers and acquisitions in the Community;

Recognising that the regulation of Mergers and Acquisitions in the CSME, based on an Approved Community Policy, requires an amendment of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas;

Also noting the proposed timeline of eighteen (18) months for the completion of arrangements for the Regional Capital Market;

Acknowledging that the requisite participation and cooperation in meetings of the Council for Finance and Planning (COFAP) and the Legal Affairs Committee (LAC) are preconditions for meeting this eighteen-month timeline;

DECISIONS

THE CONFERENCE:

With respect to Mergers and Acquisitions in the CSME,

Agreed that the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas should be amended to provide for the regulation of mergers and acquisitions in the CSME on the basis of an approved Community Policy;

Urged Member States to complete their internal consultations and approval processes on the Draft Policy on Mergers and Acquisitions in the CSME to facilitate the Council for Trade and Economic Development's (COTED's) consideration and approval of the Policy by its Fifty-Six Regular Meeting in April 2023;

With respect to the Macroeconomic Policy Agenda in support of the CSME,

Called on the COFAP and the LAC to meet as required to ensure that matters related to the macroeconomic policy coordination agenda and specifically, the regional capital market, are sufficiently progressed for decision-making by the time of the next Regular Meeting of the Conference in July 2023.

**HGC/2023/44/7 ADVANCING THE CARICOM AGRI-FOOD
SYSTEMS AGENDA: PRIORITISING REGIONAL
FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY**

- Report from His Excellency, Dr. Irfaan Ali, President of Guyana, Lead Head of Government on Agriculture, Agricultural Diversification and Food Security

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/7 entitled "Advancing the CARICOM Agri-Food Systems Agenda: Prioritising Regional Food and Nutrition Security";

Having received an update on the progress made by the CARICOM Ministerial Task Force on Food Production and Food Security (MTF) on the decisions of the Forty-Third Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM);

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Welcomed and encouraged by the outcome and success of the Regional Agri-Investment Forum and Expo II held from 19-21 August 2022 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago;

Acknowledging the successes which have been made in advancing the regional agri-food system;

Cognisant of the current food security challenges and rising food prices which the CARICOM Region is still confronting;

THE CONFERENCE:

Commended the Lead Head of Government with responsibility for Agriculture and Agriculture Development in the CARICOM Quasi-Cabinet, His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, for his leadership towards the achievement of the 25 by 2025 food security initiative;

Congratulated Trinidad and Tobago for the hosting of a successful Regional Agri-Investment Forum and Expo II;

Agreed and endorsed the priority activities of the MTF for 2023 as contained in the report presented;

Requested that the CARICOM Secretariat accelerate its efforts in the mobilization of resources towards the achievement of the 25 by 2025;

Also requested that the CARICOM Private Sector Organization Inc. (CPSO) accelerate the pace of implementation for the various agricultural investment projects already identified;

Endorsed the project proposal entitled *“Building Food Security through Innovation, Resilience, Sustainability and Empowerment”*, as presented by the Lead Head with responsibility for Agriculture;

Accepted the pledge of US\$2M from Guyana towards the financing and implementation of this regional food security project;

Mandated the MTF to oversee the mobilisation of resources for the project and drive the implementation of the project;

DECISIONS

Affirmed support for the hosting of the third Regional Agricultural Investment Forum and Expo by the Member State of Guyana in the event that no other Member State offers to host.

HGC/2023/44/8 THE BRIDGETOWN INITIATIVE FOR THE REFORM OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE (Submitted by Barbados)

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/8 entitled “The Bridgetown Initiative for the Reform of the Global Financial Architecture” and having received the presentation by -

- (i) The Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados; and*
- (ii) Professor Avinash Persaud, Special Envoy to the Prime Minister of Barbados on Investment and Financial Services;*

Considering that the polycrises including debt, food and water insecurity, the digital divide, health pandemics and antimicrobial resistance, and bio-diversity losses severely impact the Caribbean as a whole and put Middle Income Countries at risk for pauperisation;

Also considering that the impact of Climate Change and other exogenous shocks have a debilitating effect on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as well as other vulnerable developing countries;

Further considering the urgent need to provide macro-economic security, promote sustainable development and build the resilience of our countries;

Considering that the current global financial system was designed at a time when our countries had no influence and, in any event, the world today faces different challenges from those that existed a century ago;

Noting that a revised version of the Bridgetown Initiative will be made available by the end of March 2023;

DECISIONS

THE CONFERENCE:

Commended the Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados for the launch of, and advocacy on the Bridgetown Initiative;

Agreed that the time has come to work collectively for a complete restructuring of the global financial architecture to respond to the existential threats facing SIDS and other vulnerable developing countries;

Decided to build on The Bridgetown Initiative as a viable model leading to the reform of the global financial system and encouraged Member States, together with the Caribbean Development Bank and the CARICOM Development Fund, to actively engage in the refinement of the proposals;

Welcomed the Global Summit on a “New Global Financial Pact,” that is being proposed by the President of France and the Prime Minister of Barbados to be held in Paris in June 2023;

Encouraged Member States to participate in the upcoming Summit on the “New Global Financial Pact”;

Also agreed that Member States would work towards having the Bridgetown Initiative placed on the agenda for COP 28 to be held from 30 November to 12 December 2023 in the United Arab Emirates.

HGC 2022/44/9

CLIMATE CHANGE/CLIMATE FINANCE

- Report on the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Having considered Paper HGC 2022/44/9 entitled “Climate Change/Climate Finance;”

Noting the update on the outcomes of COP 27;

DECISIONS

Taking into account the discussion on the Bridgetown Initiative under Agenda Item 8;

Considering the importance of ocean resources to the economies and livelihoods of the people of the Caribbean Community;

Also noting the detailed negotiating agenda en route to COP 28;

THE CONFERENCE:

Commended the outstanding leadership from CARICOM and Antigua and Barbuda as Chair of Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), in achieving a decision to establish a Loss and Damage fund;

Noted the recommendations for further work to be conducted by States as follow-up to the decisions adopted at COP27, CMA4 and CMP17;

Agreed to high-level political advocacy to encourage greater ambition for 1.5°C amongst major economies;

Advocated for targeted support for CARICOM Member States to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and adaptation plans as well as to support the just transitions for Member States;

Requested the Council for Finance and Planning (COFAP) to ensure that the efforts underway at the global level take account of the special circumstances of Small Island Developing States (SIDs) as well as the urgency of access to grant and concessional financing;

Also requested the COFAP to factor these efforts into the deliberations on the reform of the international financial institutions ahead of the Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group, thereby developing a Regional approach to be approved by the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM);

Also agreed to advocate for systemic approaches for debt relief for CARICOM Member States in the context of unlocking new sources of finance for climate action and sustainable development including for robust work on vulnerability indices;

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Encouraged CARICOM to engage with the COP28 Chair regarding forest and forest carbon and the role of private sector, in particular the fossil fuel industry, as a means of additional development finance support for loss and damage and in global financial institution reform;

Further requested that efforts be made for the inclusion of the Bridgetown Initiative as a new agenda item for the Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA5) and COP 28;

Requested the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), and the CARICOM Secretariat to present a Work Plan for the approval of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) - Environment and Sustainable Development at its meeting in April 2023 to prepare Member States to engage effectively in the climate negotiations process, and advance the Regions' interests for high ambition, predictable and sustained support, and global cooperation for implementation;

Also requested that the CARICOM Secretariat, with the support of the CCCCC, identify the strategic areas for technical support available amongst CARICOM Institutions that can assist Member States with implementation and resource mobilisation;

Further requested the CARICOM Secretariat to work with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat to complete the Needs based Finance Assessment for the CARICOM Region to adequately quantify the cost of implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions;

With respect to ocean matters,

Agreed to high-level political advocacy for oceans at COP28, given its importance to CARICOM in climate resilience and overall sustainable development;

Mandated the CARICOM Secretariat to coordinate a high-level statement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction to be delivered at the beginning of the final negotiating conference, scheduled for 20 February to 3 March 2023 at United Nations Headquarters, New York;

Also agreed that deep-sea mineral resources will be considered by the Conference at its next regular meeting,

DECISIONS

HGC/2023/44/10 CARICOM 50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/10 entitled “CARICOM 50th Anniversary Celebration”;

Having received an update from the Secretary-General on the significance of the 50th Anniversary of the Caribbean Community;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed to develop and implement activities at the national and regional levels in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of CARICOM;

HGC/2023/44/11 UWI 75th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/11 entitled “UWI 75th Anniversary Celebration”;

THE CONFERENCE:

Noted the presentation on the plans for the celebration of The UWI’s 75th Anniversary.

HGC/2023/44/12 ENGAGEMENT WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

HGC/2023/44/12.1 THE PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA, THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JUSTIN TRUDEAU, PC, MP

Having received the Presentation of the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, and having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/12.1;

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THE CONFERENCE:

Extended a warm welcome to the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, and expressed CARICOM's appreciation for his renewed engagement and commitment to the Caribbean Region;

Acknowledged the visit as a signal of Canada's renewed interest, and urged CARICOM and Canada to provide the world with a model of a working and successful relationship;

Received the presentation in which the Prime Minister of Canada highlighted the excellent ties between CARICOM and Canada and pledged to continue to support the Region in key areas of priority, including climate change and natural disasters, access to concessional financing, trade and investment, security, and the political and social situation in Haiti;

Welcomed the announcement by Prime Minister Trudeau of \$44.8 million dollars in new funding to the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund to tackle the climate crisis and biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean;

Also welcomed Prime Minister Trudeau's announcement of the renewal of the Caribbean-Canada Trade Agreement (CARIBCAN) and the intention to renew the necessary WTO waiver;

Thanked Prime Minister Trudeau for his leadership on and commitment to the situation in Haiti and indicated CARICOM's willingness to partner with Canada in the quest for a lasting and Haitian-owned solution to the crisis;

Further welcomed the announcement by Prime Minister Trudeau to invest \$12.3 million dollars for humanitarian assistance in Haiti, and also the provision of \$10 million dollars to support the IOM to strengthen the protection of women and children along the Haiti - Dominican Republic border;

Noted with satisfaction the solidarity and willingness of Canada to advocate on behalf of CARICOM on issues of concern to the Community such as Climate Finance and Financing

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for Development; and **also thanked** the Prime Minister of Canada for his firm support to the Bridgetown Initiative which calls for a reform of global development finance;

Welcomed the proposal from the Prime Minister of Canada to continue the engagement with the Region at the highest political level, and his invitation to host CARICOM Heads of State and Government to Ottawa, Canada, later this year; and

Urged Canada to reconsider its current approach to visa requirements for citizens of the Community.

HGC/2023/44/12.2

**PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE, HIS EXCELLENCY VOLODYMYR
ZELENSKY**

Having received a virtual address from the President of Ukraine, His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy;

The Conference Chairman provided a response on behalf of the Community. See Annex 2.

HGC/2023/44/12.3

**PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, AFRICAN
EXPORT-IMPORT BANK (AFREXIMBANK), PROF.
BENEDICT OKEY ORAMAH**

Having noted Briefing Note HGC/2023/44/12(II) and exchanged views with the President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), Prof. Benedict Okey Oramah;

THE CONFERENCE:

Welcomed the presentation by the Special Guest, Professor Benedict Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Afreximbank, on the initiative towards deepening economic, trade and investment relations between Africa and the Caribbean;

Expressed gratitude to Professor Oramah and the Afreximbank for the assistance provided to CARICOM Member States in the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines as an example of the manifestation of South-South cooperation;

DECISIONS

Recalled the Inaugural African Caribbean Investment and Trade Forum (ACTIF) (September 2022, Barbados) which resulted in the Agreement for the Establishment of a Partnership between Member States of the Caribbean Community and the African Export-Import Bank (“Afreximbank”) (the “Partnership Agreement”) that to date nine (9) Member States have signed;

Also welcomed the announcement that the US\$ 1.5 billion financing package for CARICOM Member States agreed by the Board of Afreximbank would be scaled up to US\$3.0 billion upon the other Member States becoming parties to the Partnership Agreement;

Called upon those Member States which have not yet become a party to the Partnership Agreement with Afreximbank to do so at the earliest opportunity;

Further welcomed the proposal to establish a Caribbean Regional Office and the offer of support through grant financing to the CARICOM Secretariat to conduct the requisite studies;

Acknowledged the collaboration between CARICOM Central Bank Governors and Afreximbank to explore the feasibility of introducing the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) as a platform for intra-regional payments in the Caribbean which could then be integrated with the African operations to accelerate economic and trade integration among the two regions;

Noted the other opportunities for:

- (i) securing financing for the revitalization of the tourism industry in CARICOM through Afreximbank’s Construction and Tourism-Linked Relay Financing Facility (ConTour); and
- (ii) development of the African Cruise market which would attenuate some of the concerns about the absence of a cruise programme during the Summer in the Caribbean.

DECISIONS

HGC/2023/44/12.4

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION (WTO), DR. NGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA**

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/7 entitled “Engagement with Special Guest: Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO)”; and,

Having received an address from the Director-General of the WTO, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala;

THE CONFERENCE:

Noted the call by the Director-General of the WTO for early ratification of the Fisheries Subsidies Agreement by CARICOM WTO Members;

Also noted the Director-General's request for CARICOM's full engagement in the second wave of negotiations on fisheries subsidies, and her call for Members to work towards deliverables for the Thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference in other priority areas such as agriculture and food security and WTO reform;

Further noted the Director-General's request for CARICOM to take steps to address its capacity constraints to fuller engagement in the WTO, as well as the capacity building efforts of the WTO for the Region;

Welcomed the indication by the Director-General that the WTO is working hard to bring the interests of small states to the fore.

HGC/2023/44/13

UPDATE ON REGIONAL SECURITY MATTERS

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/13 entitled “Regional Security Brief” prepared by the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS); and having received an update from the Executive Director of IMPACS, Col. Michael Jones, in Caucus;

THE CONFERENCE:

DECISIONS

Mandated the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE) and the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) to prepare for a Special Symposium to consider Crime and Violence as a public health concern which is to be hosted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in April 2023.

Also mandated CARICOM Secretariat, CARPHA, IMPACS and the Regional Security System (RSS) to prepare a report covering the related social, economic and judicial issues of crime and violence as a public health concern for the consideration of the Conference at its March 2023 Inter-Sessional meeting.

Requested that IMPACS submit for consideration at the March 2023 Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference, the challenges being faced which prevent the effective operation of Regional Security Border and Information and Intelligence Systems as a matter of urgency.

HGC/2023/44/14

SITUATION IN HAITI

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/14 entitled “Situation in Haiti”;

Having engaged with The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, in Caucus;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed to issue a ‘Statement on Haiti’ as follows:

STATEMENT ON HAITI

Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), at their 44th Regular Meeting in The Bahamas reiterated that the Community must play a leadership role in addressing the deteriorating situation in Haiti, a Member State of the Community, towards which there are moral and political obligations.

DECISIONS

Heads affirmed that decisive action is needed at the earliest opportunity by CARICOM in view of the mounting insecurity and its widespread impact on all facets of Haitian life. The Heads of Government were joined in part of their discussions by the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada.

The Heads of Government acknowledged the adoption of the December 21, 2022 political agreement, the National Consensus for an Inclusive Transition and Transparent Elections, launched by the Honourable Ariel Henry, the Interim Prime Minister of Haiti, but were of the view that it needed to be more inclusive. In this regard, Heads of Government agreed to convene an early meeting of stakeholders in Jamaica.

They also agreed to participate in a meeting to be convened in Haiti with Haitian stakeholders, to assist in the development of a plan to restore security and the rule of law.

The Heads of Government noted the various forms of security assistance provided by the Government of Canada and placed emphasis on strengthening the capacity of the Haitian National Police to protect the general population from criminal activities.

Finally, the Heads of Government agreed to build international partnerships in support of efforts to return Haiti to peace and stability as a necessary precursor for free, fair and credible elections.

HGC/2023/44/15 BORDER ISSUES

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/15 entitled "Border Issues" in Caucus;

THE CONFERENCE:

With respect to Belize-Guatemala Relations,

Noted the update received in relation to the territorial dispute between Belize and Guatemala;

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Reiterated its support for the security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Belize;

Agreed to include an appropriate reference regarding this matter in the Communiqué emanating from this Forty-Fourth Regular Meeting;

With respect to Guyana-Venezuela Relations,

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

Reiterated its support for the security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Guyana;

Agreed to include an appropriate reference regarding this matter in the Communiqué emanating from this Forty-Fourth Regular Meeting.

HGC/2023/44/16 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Having considered Paper HGC/2023/44/16 entitled “Community Governance” in Caucus;

THE CONFERENCE:

Adopted the Revised Rules of Procedure of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (“Rules of Procedure”);

Agreed that the Rules of Procedure would take effect from 17 February 2023;

Also agreed to the calendar of meetings for the Conference of Heads of Government for 2023;

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DECISIONS

| Calendar of Meetings of the Conference of Heads of Government in 2023 | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Dates | Meeting Mode | Comments |
| 16-17 February | Regular in-person Meeting | 1 day Retreat for HGC to be normally included |
| 15 March | Virtual Inter-Sessional Meeting | Before IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings |
| 6 May | Virtual Inter-Sessional Meeting | |
| 3-6 July | Regular In-person Meeting | Celebration of CARICOM Day |
| 5 September | Virtual Inter-Sessional Meeting | Before UN General Assembly and IMF/World Bank Annual Meeting |
| 15 November | Virtual Inter-Sessional Meeting | Before COP 28 |

Reiterated that the Rules of Procedure apply *mutatis mutandis* to the Organs and Bodies of the Community;

Noted the Proposed Future Revisions.

**HGC/2023/44/18 DATE AND VENUE OF THE FORTY-FIFTH
REGULAR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE
(DOMINICA, JULY 2023)**

THE CONFERENCE:

Accepted the offer of Dominica to host the Forty-Fifth Regular Meeting of the Conference during the period 3-6 July 2023.

HGC/2023/44/19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**HGC/2023/44/19.1 FINANCIAL MATTERS IN RELATION TO THE CARIBBEAN
DISASTER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (CDEMA)**

Having received an update from the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia on financial matters in relation to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, in Caucus;

DECISIONS

THE CONFERENCE:

Acknowledged that CDEMA Participating States exist in a complex multi-hazard environment where climate change is increasing the severity of impact and loss and damage from weather-related events;

Reiterated that CDEMA plays and is expected to play an increasingly critical regional role, whilst at the same time being inadequately resourced and having a weak financial position;

Called on member states to honour their financial obligations to CDEMA through timely payments of contributions and settling of arrears.

HGC/2023/44/19.2

Air Transport Connectivity

***Having considered** the update from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) on the ongoing Consultancy pertaining to regional air transport connectivity;*

***Taking account** of the intervention made by The Bahamas about the possibility of local investors investing in a Regional air carrier and that overtures had already been made to BahamasAir to proffer solutions to the Regional transport crisis;*

***Noting** the information provided by the CDB that airline routes were deemed to be underserved by up to 50% of the services which obtained in 2019;*

***Also noting** the proposal for negotiations with the relevant parties to make use of existing air transport assets in the region with a view to getting air connectivity back to pre-COVID levels and beyond, including in Member States that are currently underserved;*

THE CONFERENCE:

Received the report from the CDB on the ongoing consultancy pertaining to regional air transport connectivity.

DECISIONS

HGC/2023/44/19.3

Update on the British Virgin Islands

Having received an update from the Premier of British Virgin Islands (BVI) on the governance situation in the BVI, in Caucus;

THE CONFERENCE:

Commended Premier and Minister of Finance Dr. the Hon. Natalio D. Wheatley and his Administration for the good progress made in implementing governance reforms and firm commitment to consulting the people of the British Virgin Islands in the process;

Called on the United Kingdom to repeal the Order in Council to impose direct rule on the people of the British Virgin Islands by a colonial instrument which is the antithesis of democratic governance;

Endorsed the United Nations (UN) resolution A/77/408 DR V on the Question of the British Virgin Islands adopted by the 77th UN General Assembly on 12 December 2022;

Reaffirmed CARICOM's commitment to support the British Virgin Islands at the relevant United Nations fora on decolonization, including the UN regional seminar on decolonization, UN Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24), and UN Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization);

Welcomed the upcoming General Election in the British Virgin Islands that are constitutionally due by 12 May 2023.

HGC/2023/44/19.4

Developments in Suriname

Having received a report from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of Suriname on the ongoing disturbances in that country, in Caucus;

THE CONFERENCE:

Agreed to issue a statement on 'Recent Developments in Suriname' as follows:

DECISIONS

STATEMENT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SURINAME

CARICOM Heads of Government received a report from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of Suriname on the ongoing disturbances in that country.

CARICOM reaffirms its support for the democratically elected Government of Suriname under the leadership of President Chandrikapersad Santokhi.

The Heads of Government took note of the unfolding situation in Suriname and strongly condemned the violent attacks on people as well as private and public facilities including the parliament. They recognized the right to freedom of expression, and the right to peaceful protest but expressed the view that there can be no excuse for the use of violence in any type of demonstration. They affirmed that these actions only serve to undermine the rule of law and the stability of democracies. Furthermore, they threaten the lives and livelihoods of our citizens and are inimical to the interest of our population.

CARICOM stands in solidarity with all law abiding citizens of Suriname and urges all concerned to make every effort to maintain public safety. All efforts must be made to restore calm as a matter of urgency.

HGC/2023/44/19.5

Sanctions on Cuba

Recalling the humanitarian situation in Cuba;

THE CONFERENCE:

Reiterated their call for the lifting of the unjust financial, economic and trade embargo against the Government and people of Cuba.

HGC/2023/44/19.6

Fuel

Acknowledging the rising cost of fuel globally; and, in the context of the bilateral relationship with the United States;

DECISIONS

THE CONFERENCE:

Urged the removal of the sanctions on Venezuela to allow for countries in the Region to benefit from the PetroCaribe initiative and for further progress on the exploration of the cross-border natural gas fields between Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

HGC/2023/44/19.7 Global Tourism Resilience Day

***Acknowledging** the importance of tourism to the economic and social development of Member States and the unprecedented challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on tourism-dependent economies;*

***Also acknowledging** that the pandemic increased the need for tourism destinations to intensify efforts to deliver a more sustainable tourism product that balances the social, economic, environmental and human interests;*

THE CONFERENCE:

Commended the Government of Jamaica for tabling a resolution at the United Nations for the official designation of 17 February annually as Global Tourism Resilience Day;

Also commended CARICOM countries for their support of the resolution which was successfully adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 6 February 2023.

Forty-Fourth Regular Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government
of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Nassau, The Bahamas, 15-17 February 2023

DECISIONS

ANNEX 2

**RESPONSE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, HON
PHILIP DAVIS, PRIME MINISTER OF THE BAHAMAS TO THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE, HIS
EXCELLENCY VOLODOMYR ZELENSKY**

1



**RESPONSE TO THE MESSAGE FROM
HIS EXCELLENCY VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY, PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE**

**HON. PHILIP DAVIS, KC, MP
PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH
OF THE BAHAMAS**

FRIDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 2023

**Forty-Fourth Regular Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government
of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Nassau, The Bahamas, 15-17 February 2023**

DECISIONS

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Mr. President:

Greetings on behalf of the Governments and Peoples of the Caribbean Community.

Our summit gathering here in Nassau, Bahamas, marks 50 years of partnership, collaboration, and co-operation.

We know that by working together, we can take full advantage of the opportunities at hand, to craft and promote a happy and prosperous future for generations to come.

We also know, that by working together, we can confront our collective challenges: from the existential threats of climate change, to the post-pandemic shocks to our health and economies.

Today, on behalf of the Caribbean Community, I reiterate our sincere and lasting solidarity with the people of Ukraine and the ongoing fight for liberation.

We have watched in admiration, as you and your people have defended yourselves against formidable odds, and with unimaginable bravery.

And even as we have watched in horror, the bombs and missiles attacking your towns and villages, we have marvelled at your dignity and steely determination.

We condemn the actions taken by Russia in violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

And we stand firmly with you, and the international community, in seeking a just and secure diplomatic solution to this terrible crisis.

**Forty-Fourth Regular Meeting of the Conference of the Heads of Government
of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Nassau, The Bahamas, 15-17 February 2023**

DECISIONS

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Most of us in the Caribbean region are descended from peoples who were once brutally enslaved.

And many of our nations were born out of the ashes of great colonial struggles, fully committed to realising the vision of Independence, and the right to self-determination.

We wish for you now, what we wished for ourselves: the right to live freely and peaceably; alongside neighbours with whom we may or may not agree; amongst family and friends and all those whom we love, protected by the rule of law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President:

We thank you for your message, and pray that when we meet face-to-face, it is in happier, more peaceful times.

We pray for your safety, and that of the Ukrainian people.

And we pray God's continuing blessings upon you.

END