

**STATEMENT BY
HE DR PAULETTE BETHEL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

**ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**

**GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE
SECOND COMMITTEE**

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Mr. Chairman,

I have to honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM associates itself with the statement made by Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset CARICOM wishes to extend its congratulations to you and the Bureau of the 2nd Committee on your election.

Mr. Chairman,

You can be assured of the full support and cooperation of your CARICOM colleagues as you guide the work of this Committee.

Our work during this session is being conducted against the backdrop of a prolonged period of global economic instability and uncertainty. The fragile state of the global economy has placed in jeopardy achievement of the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Given the size and structure of CARICOM economies, the region's economic prospects closely mirror the global outlook. Fiscal challenges in developed and developing countries have worsened over the past year triggering a crisis of confidence in financial, labour and housing markets, and dampening global growth prospects. The economies of CARICOM's main trading and economic partners in the developed world continue to struggle as the fallout from the global financial and economic crisis persists. Recovery in CARICOM Member States continues to lag behind other developing countries, as key sectors such as tourism continue to struggle and foreign direct investment in the region has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels.

Many CARICOM Member states remain confronted by stubbornly high debt ratios that, together with sustained high unemployment rates and weak indicators of financial sector activity and stability, provide clear evidence of the lingering impact of the global economic recession.

CARICOM wishes to reiterate its call for enhanced access to grant and concessionary financing from the Multilateral Development Banks to assist us in rebounding from this crisis, given our limited access to global capital markets. We remain concerned that there is insufficient recognition, by the international community, of the needs and concerns of small, open, vulnerable and highly indebted economies like ours, which by virtue of our GDP per capita, are classified as middle income countries. Even in this time of crisis, we continue to be overlooked by the international community, on the presumption that our countries do not require international assistance.

There is an urgent need for greater flexibility in the rules of the Washington based multilateral institutions, which have the tendency to rush to “graduate” middle-income developing countries simply on the basis of statistics on per capita income. We fully share the view expressed by the UN Secretary-General, and I quote, “the use of per capita income to classify countries as a means of guiding development cooperation disregards the nature and multidimensional nature of development.”. The Secretary-General has further noted that this over reliance on per capita income to guide development cooperation ignores the fact that many middle-income countries have not yet fully developed the capacity and capabilities to independently resolve the challenges they face, and that many remain highly vulnerable to external shocks and internal crises, despite having higher levels of per capita income.

In this regard, CARICOM supports the recommendation contained in the report of the Secretary-General A/66/220 entitled “Development cooperation with middle-income” that calls for the establishment of a high-level panel or an ad hoc working group, which could elaborate ,in greater detail, on the appropriate framework with which to tackle the development challenges of middle-income countries.

CARICOM also believes that the upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system should take into account the concerns of middle income developing countries. The United Nations must strengthen its role in these countries to ensure that their remaining development challenges are addressed effectively, the achieved gains are preserved and decreased financial assistance does not negatively affect their efforts to pursue sustainable development.

CARICOM welcomes the outcome of the Rio +20 Conference. We wish to extend our gratitude to the Government of Brazil for their excellent leadership. We need to capitalize on the momentum generated from this conference and swiftly implement what was agreed on in Rio.

We are particularly interested in the mandate given to the United Nations Statistical Commission at the Rio conference to launch a programme of work to develop broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product (GDP) in order to better inform policy decisions, building on existing initiatives, in consultation with relevant United Nations system entities and other relevant organizations.

A number of CARICOM Member States have signaled their intention of serving in the bodies established at Rio +20 to undertake the work on Sustainable Development Goals and on a new strategy for financing sustainable development. We continue to insist that the perspective of our region must be incorporated in these processes.

For CARICOM a priority in the follow-up to Rio +20 is agreement on the modalities for the 3rd International Conference on SIDS in 2014. We believe that the modalities for the preparatory process must ensure a robust assessment of the gaps in implementation, challenges and new and emerging issues confronting SIDS. We call on the international community to support the 2014 and the preparatory process including through contributions to the SIDS Trust Fund in UNDESA. CARICOM also supports the designation of 2014 as the international year of small island developing states as a means of mobilizing support.

During this session the 2nd committee will consider a resolution on the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea. Within the Caribbean we have recognized that an integrated management approach that involves all relevant stakeholders provides us with the best option for protecting the Caribbean Sea, our most valuable shared resource. The Commission represents an oceans governance framework to promote cooperation towards effective management of the Caribbean Sea area. CARICOM calls on the international community to support this initiative including the designation by the General Assembly of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development.

Climate Change represents a grave threat to the survival and viability of CARICOM Member States and other SIDS. Science continues to warn that we are on the threshold of irreversible and potentially catastrophic changes to the global climate system. Recent science points to a gross underestimation of the severity of sea-level rise with the rate of sea-level over the past twenty years doubling the rate observed over the entire last century.

It has been estimated that the potential economic costs of climate change as a percentage of GDP to Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) if no action is taken to reduce the adverse impacts could be on average 14% of GDP per year by 2025, and 39% of GDP by 2050. It should be noted that the study which derived these estimates was undertaken prior to recent scientific findings on the acceleration of sea level rise, and likely underestimates the severity of the challenge facing Caribbean SIDS.

The upcoming Climate Change Conference in Doha must prioritize the pre-2020 work necessary to ensure that the world is on track in 2020 to meet the below 2 degrees or 1.5 degree globally agreed goals. In this regard CARICOM believes Doha must achieve the following:

1. The finalization of all necessary arrangements to ensure a legally binding 2nd Commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol from 1 January 2013 ;
2. Agreement on the scope and modalities of the Review of the adequacy the 2 degree goal, with a view to strengthening it to well below 1.5 degrees, consistent with the political agreement on this issue reached in Copenhagen.
3. The establishment of an international mechanism to address loss and damage.

4. Clarity from developed countries on climate finance pathways to ensure that finance after the end of the fast start finance period is scaled up to the 100 billion by 2020.
5. Meaningful process towards closing the pre-2020 mitigation ambition gap to minimize and avoid potentially catastrophic impacts of climate change.

We do not believe that this Committee should be another forum for climate change negotiations and we will work with others to ensure that this year's resolution is procedural in nature.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM will speak in greater detail during consideration of specific agenda items. However let me again reiterate our group's commitment to work with you, the Bureau and other Member States to ensure the success of this session.