

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

MESSAGE TO THE 25<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY  
Grenada, 4 – 8 July 2004

*Delivered by Mr. Anwarul K. Chowdhury,  
High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Least Developed Countries,  
Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States*

I am delighted to send my warmest greetings to the Heads of Government of CARICOM taking part in this 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The successful cooperation that has emerged among CARICOM's 15 Member States can serve as an inspiring model for other regions and developing countries, in particular among islands and coastal nations around the world. CARICOM is a fine example of how regional collaboration can enhance trade and economic growth, and above all, create conditions for better understanding among nations. It can be instrumental in bringing about the peace and stability and attaining the Millennium Development Goals -- critical elements of the Millennium Declaration agreed by all Governments as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I know that the members of CARICOM are making significant contributions in preparation for next year's 10-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The review meeting in Mauritius will take up critical issues, including the spread of HIV/AIDS -- a challenge of particular and pressing concern in your region. The Caribbean has some of the highest rates of HIV infection in the world, and the epidemic is taking a devastating toll on development. I hope you will take every measure necessary to respond in a way commensurate with the threat, and commensurate with the Millennium Development Goal that calls for halting and beginning to reverse the spread by 2015. The United Nations will do all it can to assist you in that mission.

Across the full range of challenges facing our organizations, the UN will continue to pursue close ties with CARICOM -- in keeping with the cooperation agreement of 1997, and as reaffirmed in this year's Third General Meeting of the UN and CARICOM in New York. But although the United Nations will keep working with you in confronting the many issues ahead, the answers must first and foremost come from within the Caribbean region itself. CARICOM provides an excellent forum in which to formulate them. In that spirit, I look forward to an ever stronger partnership between us in the years to come, and wish you a most successful meeting.