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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: charting a dynamic course for decolonization in commencing the Fourth International Decade and in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, through commitment to mandate, collaboration, pragmatism and agility

**Parish of St. John, Dominica
25 to 27 August 2021**

ADDRESS BY

MR. ROOSEVELT SKERRIT

**PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FINANCE,
RESILIENCE, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, INVESTMENT,
PLANNING, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCASTING OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA**

Madam Chair,

As the saying goes, all good things must come to an end.

I am told that you have now come to the end of an intensive three days of discussion, information sharing and most of all decision making.

It was indeed a pleasure to have been your host despite the challenges and restrictions we were forced to implement due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I was privy to some of your discussions on devising new strategies and setting new objectives for the advancement of the Decolonization Agenda.

I noted that this conference was to have considered recent developments with respect to the 17 Non- Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean, Pacific and others regions, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ladies and gentlemen, including COVID-19 response as a special agenda item must be commended.

I will be the first to admit that, where the COVID-19 pandemic is concerned the stakes are high. It is therefore the responsibility of all every single one of us to rise to the occasion. The reality is, if we fail to do so, we could lose a generation.

Immediately before us is this dual challenge of how to keep our people safe even as we seek to reopen sectors of our economy – and particularly right now, the reopening of our borders. Many of us must still battle with the effects of Climate as we continue our efforts at building necessary resilience to natural and economic shocks that are beyond our control.

And so, we must ensure that during this most trying season, non-self-governing territories also have access to resources, equipment and supplies to fight this pandemic.

I therefore urge all of us to keep championing the case of equitable distribution of vaccines for citizens everywhere and denounce unnecessary and unwarranted blacklisting of countries who must battle to control fluctuating numbers as cases rise and fall.

In that regard I look forward to reviewing the full report of the Rapporteur. My hope is that decisions taken at his conference will be eagerly translated in action.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the Government of Dominica has already expressed how proud we are to have hosted this C-24 Conference. More than that, we are pleased that it has been a resounding success.

I take this opportunity therefore, to thank you Madame Chair for the professionalism and skills you displayed in managing this Conference. I also expressed thanks to Ambassador Loreen Bannis-Roberts for her efforts at ensuring that this conference became a reality.

I express sincere thanks to all of you who have traveled from near and far, for it was your presence that made the conference what it was. My staff at the ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Health-care workers, police and security officers and staff of the secretariat all who became your temporary neighbours to ensure that this conference went smoothly.

And last but certainly by no means least, I say thanks to the management and staff of this hotel Resort and all other services providers for displaying the type of hospitality that only Dominica is known for.

Bon Voyage as you prepare to return home and I look forward to welcoming you and your families back to our nature isle and