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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. KENNETH DARROUX**

**MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND DIASPORA  
RELATIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF  
DOMINICA**



**Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica**

Address by

**HONOURABLE DR. KENNETH DARROUX**

**MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND DIASPORA  
RELATIONS**

to the

**UNITED NATIONS C-24 CONFERENCE**

*“Charting a Dynamic course for in Commencing the Fort International Decade and in light of the  
Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, through Commitment to mandate, collaboration,  
pragmatism and agility”*

**August 25-27, 2021**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Kempinski Resort and Spa**

**Portsmouth, Dominica**

## **Salutation:**

1. Chair of the C24 Committee – H. E. Ms. Kisha McGuire
2. Hon. .... Deputy Premiere of the BVI
3. Hon...Ministers.....
4. H. E. Ambassador Loreen Bannis Roberts
5. Excellencies - Permanent Representatives
6. Deputy Permanent Representatives
7. Representatives of the United Nations
8. Representative of the C-24 Secretariat
9. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen
10. Media

I am pleased to welcome you to this year's C-24 Conference, the first of its kind to be hosted in the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Let me welcome to Paradise, welcome to the Nature Isle of the World, welcome to the Commonwealth of Dominica, a tiny island nation, a mere 290 square miles, ideally located between the two French territories of Guadeloupe and Martinique and home to the second largest boiling lake in the world... known as the only country in the world with 365 rivers, we sometimes joke about this by assigning them, one for every day of the year.

Madame Chair, Excellencies, we do not promise visitors white sandy beaches or ice-skating rinks, but we guarantee you from the moment you arrive on this island you are destined to become at peace with nature. We boast of unique natural attractions some protected as world heritage sites and our own indigenous people, the Kalinagos, who form an integral part of our heritage and culture.

In essence, we are a breath-taking piece of rock, covered in majestic greenery which will leave you speechless. We are without a doubt the 'nature island' of the world. More recently we have become known for our advances in climate resilience and our pronouncement to become the first climate resilient nation in the world; - an ambitious goal, that we as a nation are feverishly working towards.

Distinguished Delegates, notwithstanding all of the travel restrictions the world over, I am heartened to see representatives from a wide section of the globe forming part of this year's Conference and I do hope your travel here to attend this most important meeting was hassle-free, and that in spite of your packed and short schedules, that you do find some time to enjoy the natural treasures that we have to offer. In fact, I was informed that a whale watching excursion has been planned for you, and I guarantee you that you won't be disappointed, as the deep waters off our coastline is resident to more than 200 sperm whales, making it the best place in the world to see these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat.

We have also offered you a conference setting in a world class resort that I'm sure each and everyone of you will enjoy....In fact I hope that you won't get distracted from the important work that you have to do here, by your magnificent accommodations here at the Kempinski Hotel.

So, Ladies and gentlemen, whilst this COVID-19 pandemic has robbed you of an opportunity to experience Eden and natural beauty at its finest, I would like to extend a warm invitation to all of you...to visit Dominica again, when numbers are reduced and protocols have eased to experience a true Dominican vacation.

And speaking of COVID-19, unfortunately, this conference is happening at a time when the entire world is still locked in battle against this dreaded COVID-19 pandemic, and although we have enjoyed a relatively a fair degree of success, in recent days, we have seen a surge of cases here on island, which even threatened the cancellation of this event. On this note, I would like to recognize and appreciate the extraordinary efforts of the organizers of this event...the UN, C24, Ambassador Loreen Bannis and the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and all the state entities, who in spite of the challenges, have managed to put together this event. Hats off to ALL of you....

In fact, had this conference taken place but a month earlier, I would be able to boast of a grant total of not more than 200 cases, mostly imported, captured at our ports, through our robust surveillance system and protocols. I would have been able to report of zero community spread and zero deaths, but as fate would have it, we were destined not to have been spared the wrath of this invisible plague. But we are confident, that the resilience of our people, our government and our small, yet resourceful nation will see us through.

Distinguished guests, December 14, 2020, marked the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was adopted as General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.

Since the adoption of the Resolution by the General Assembly in 1960, the decolonization agenda has made significant advances throughout the world. With more than 50 of the current U.N. Member States in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific gaining Political Independence.

The fact that Dominica has agreed to host this year's conference in the height of a global pandemic, supports that Dominica fully subscribes to the importance of the C-24 Committee and its significance as part of the United Nations Agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen, we convene this meeting at a most difficult time in our existence. At a time when the United Nations has been situating itself in pursuit of justice, respect and fairness but more so in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic that presents economic uncertainties the world over, unlike any other we have witnessed in recent history.

The effect of this pandemic is even more daunting for Small Island Developing States, some already overly exposed to economic and environmental shocks long before COVID-19.

The attendance of so many small and developing countries at this year's event further supports that we are not merely passive members to these U.N. Committees, but rather we recognise the needs of each member state as it relates to sustainable development, including the least developed Countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states, particularly those forced to function amidst ongoing conflict or post conflict.

Additionally, the ongoing experiences of managing the COVID-19 pandemic have exposed, and in some cases, exacerbated the overlapping inequalities, as well as weaknesses in socioeconomic, and political systems, and threatened reversals in human development around the world.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Dominica is proud to be associated with this year's Conference, being held under the theme: *“Charting a Dynamic course for in Commencing the Fort International Decade and in light of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, through Commitment to mandate, collaboration, pragmatism and agility.”*



It is my hope that this Conference will see renewed committed efforts and vision in the interest of colonized countries and people.

The Commonwealth of Dominica takes this opportunity to reaffirms its determination to continue to take all steps necessary to ensure the effective and full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

In closing, I am sure you will have many fruitful and rewarding exchanges over the next few days, and I look forward to the report on the outcome. I wish this conference the very best, and I'm hoping that your deliberations on this tiny, small developing island nation, will be an historic one, one where ground-breaking decisions are made, and you will take back home with you, cherished memories, not only of our island paradise, but knowing that your deliberations here would have made the world a tad better place for all of us.

**I THANK YOU!!**