



**Statement on behalf of the Caribbean Community
(CARICOM) on the occasion of the High-level Political
Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development**

Ministerial Segment

July 14, 2020

Madam President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the fourteen (14) Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Belize on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

We gather at this 5th High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at a time of great global upheaval and risk. A global pandemic, climate disruption, racial injustice and ever rising inequalities within and between states, are putting our collective ambition of meaningful sustainable development to the test. Our current situation necessitates a global response that aligns with the theme of this year's forum - a response that implements accelerated and transformative pathways in order to realise the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

The decade of action and delivery will culminate in 2030, but it is the decisions we make now, the choices in the next few months that will determine how many of the most vulnerable within our global community will survive. This is not hyperbole. This is the urgent reality of the small island and low lying coastal developing states that make up our Caribbean Community. No one can predict what comes next, but what is clear is that we can no longer accept the reiteration of age-old messages and the renewal of rhetorical commitments to the most vulnerable. In order for us to weather this crisis and build back better, it is not words but appropriate urgent measurable actions on the ground that will ensure a sustainable recovery path.

Madame President,

For far too long CARICOM Member states have raised the alarm to our specific challenges that placed us in persistently precarious developmental positions. We warned that if not addressed that the achievement of the sustainable development goals would be impossible. Yet here we are in a moment of multiple converging crises where our pre-existing challenges are exacerbated, our economies are rapidly deteriorating, debt burdens are increasing and the impacts of climate change continue to rav-

age our socio-economic and environmental landscape. But our commitment to the 2030 agenda and the implementation of the sustainable development goals has never faltered. It is indeed a testament to this resolve that this year's forum will receive the Voluntary National Reviews of three of our members. We applaud and commend Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam President,

It is no accident that the seventeen priorities of the SAMOA Pathway align with most of the sustainable development goals, CARICOM's development pathway is clearly defined both in the global 2030 agenda and in our SIDS blue print for action. But the promise of transformation embedded in these frameworks is yet to be delivered. But CARICOM cannot afford to linger in despair, we continue to speak up, we continue hold unfair systems accountable, while working to ensure our populations are not left out or left behind.

CARICOM will continue to be a champion of the transformation potential of the 2030 agenda, and continue to be a champion of the principles of the United Nations. Today we raise the call to the entire global community to rally in this time of uncertainty, much like we have done in the past. The UN is coming into its 75th year of weathering global crises. Let us make the most of the opportunity this new moment of upheaval provides for us to enter into a new frontier of multilateralism and international cooperation. One where the unity and solidarity and good will of this global community infuses us with purpose and where we allow the 2030 agenda to drive our coordinated holistic integrated and people centred response for sustainable development.

The window of opportunity to make measurable and good progress is closing rapidly, and so we must act in haste. We do not want to convene the next HLPF in the midst of a dire humanitarian crisis brought on by our inactions.

Madam president,

CARICOM commends the efforts of United Nations Development System, who continue to work closely with our member states, in response to both the pandemic and the severe socio-economic shocks. The system is truly being tested, and we are grateful for the support received thus far. And as the work continues to strengthen the UNDS, it is critical that the gaps and deficiencies revealed by

these demanding times, be addressed adequately, to improve the work being done in the field to assist member states with the implementation of the SDGs.

No one can disagree that this moment begs for a resilient and sustainable recovery for all. But what is less clear is that a sustainable response for SIDS depends on the decision-makers who shape the international development architecture. The decisions made in the short term, will have lasting impacts on our member states' ability effectively recover. SIDS specific decisions on debt relief, and the scaling up of resilience financing between countries, bilateral, multilateral agencies and private sector is an imperative. The appropriate outcomes have to contribute to dismantling the vicious cycle of uncertainty, debt-dependency and unrealised sustainable development potential in our member states.

Madam President,

This Forum provides the space for member states to not only follow up and review progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, but also, for us to ensure that the systems and mechanisms in place at the international, regional and national levels are able to facilitate and support the needs of member states. Five years on, our current situation provides extreme but necessary impetus for us to accelerate appropriate actions toward delivering meaningful sustainable development for all.

I thank you.