

## **CARICOM-MEXICO SUMMIT: JOINT DECLARATION**

We, the Heads of State and/or Government of the Caribbean Community Member States and Mexico, gathered in Belize City, Belize, to hold the Fourth CARICOM–Mexico Summit;

Inspired by four decades of dialogue and friendship;

Committed to strengthening ties between CARICOM and Mexico;

Dedicated to the integrated regional development and the economic prosperity of our countries;

Inspired by Mexico's renewed commitment to deepen and broaden its relations with CARICOM through dialogue and cooperation;

Deeply grieved by the human losses and material damages caused by recent natural phenomena in both the Caribbean countries and Mexico, and gravely concerned by the negative effect natural disasters have in our development processes;

Determined to break the vicious cycle of destruction and reconstruction brought about by natural disasters, guided by the Caribbean's Regional Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy and Programming Framework 2014-2024, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction;

Recognizing the importance of improving information exchange on disaster risk, early warning and their management systems;

Acknowledging the important capabilities that the Caribbean has developed and successfully implemented regarding disaster risk reduction;

Seriously concerned about global warming, its adverse effects and the likely irreversibility of its impacts on our peoples, future generations and ecosystems, and determined to strengthen regional cooperation and action to reduce our vulnerability and generate resilience to the adverse effects of climate change;

Also concerned with the decline in correspondent banking relationships with banks in developing countries in light of recent de-risking actions by some of the major international banking partners;

Aware that the criteria currently used to determine Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligibility does not reflect the full realities of our economies, and in the case of the Caribbean countries, it undermines the possibility of their achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth;

Convinced of the need to continue cooperating in the prioritised areas according to the CARICOM Strategic Plan for 2015 to 2019;

Agree to:

Reaffirm the commitment of Mexico and the CARICOM countries to the new global development agenda, consisting of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Support the Growth and Development Agendas of CARICOM and Mexico towards creating an enabling environment that facilitates building of resilience, innovation and entrepreneurship as a means of unlocking the potential of our nations.

Commit to strengthen cooperation within the region and with our developed partners, international organisations and agencies towards enhancing support for greater adaptation and mitigation measures such as the implementation of sustainable energy technology and early warning systems; and strengthen resilience and reduce our vulnerability, particularly in Small Island Developing States and countries with low-lying coastal areas.

Stand in solidarity with the peoples of those countries affected by the passage of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, José, and Maria, and with the people of Mexico who were affected by two strong earthquakes, Hurricane Katia, and three tropical cyclones.

Welcome the Mexico-CARICOM strategy for comprehensive disaster risk management comprising three main lines of work: 1) strengthening of initiatives already in place, notably the PITCA and UN-GGIM projects of the Association of Caribbean States; 2) a complementary cooperation agenda which includes training and exchange of best practices in a range of relevant areas, such as early warning, awareness raising, emergency response, rehabilitation of physical and telecommunications infrastructure, risk transfer and public-private partnerships for disaster response and reconstruction; and 3) joint action in multilateral fora and international mobilization of support in further strengthening the Caribbean institutional capabilities for disaster risk management, including on economic issues such as graduation as high income countries and preventing de-risking measures;

Warmly welcome the financial contribution made by Mexico to strengthen the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF).

Support the establishment of a hydrometeorological monitoring centre for the Caribbean region that will allow for timely anticipation of risk, build capacities and contribute to risk management for the benefit of our communities.

Collaborate to ensure the success of the upcoming international Donor Conference convened by CARICOM to take place on 21 November 2017 at the United Nations, New York to coordinate assistance for Member States most affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, ensuring an outcome that includes clear and concrete results.

Reiterate the call to review and modify the International Financial Institutions' (IFIs) current "graduation" criteria for Official Development Assistance so as to adequately reflect the reality of the vulnerability and the specific needs of Highly-Indebted Middle Income Countries (HIMICs), particularly Caribbean States. "Graduation" serves as an obstacle to the attainment of development objectives, including the SDGs.

Recognize the promotion of sustainable tourism as one of the keys to economic growth in the Caribbean region, as identified in the Strategic Plan for the Caribbean Community 2015-2019. On this issue, Mexico shares the "Integration Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for the Tourism Sector (2016-2022)" which has the objective of integrating criteria for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as the reduction of the adverse impacts that Climate Change has and will have on the activities of the sector. In addition we agree to strengthen cooperation in this area, including in multi-destination tourism.

Note the designation of 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development and the opportunity this presents to create a more responsible tourism sector capable of harnessing its immense potential in terms of economic prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental preservation. In this regard, welcome Jamaica's hosting of the Conference on Jobs and Inclusive Growth: Partnerships for Sustainable Tourism from 27th to 29th November 2017, in Montego Bay. The event, which will be held for the first time in the region, represents a unique opportunity for the Caribbean to showcase its diverse tourism product to the world.

Reaffirm the strategic importance of the coordination and cooperation between CARICOM and Mexico in order to achieve a common agenda committed to democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and to the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

Reiterate support for the promotion of nuclear disarmament and reaffirm our commitment to the nuclear weapon free zone of Latin America and the Caribbean. Further note the important role played by Mexico as the host country of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

Welcome the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, on 7 July 2017, of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and encourage all countries to ratify the Treaty.

Acknowledge the accomplishment of the Sixth Mexico-CARICOM Technical Cooperation Programme offered within the framework of the Third CARICOM-Mexico Summit, which included the training programme for teachers of Spanish as a second language, a workshop on innovation and entrepreneurship, held in September 2017 in Mexico and a training programme on the use of statistics for public policy. Also welcome the forthcoming workshop on non-communicable diseases to be held in early 2018.

Applaud the success of the collaboration agreement between the Mexican Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) in support of the Program to Improve Capacities for Agricultural Development in the Caribbean.

Recognize the positive impact of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Federal Commission for Protection from Sanitary Risks (COFEPRIS) that provides support for the establishment of the Caribbean Regulatory System (CRS).

Approve the Seventh Mexico-CARICOM Technical Cooperation Programme (2017-2019), which establishes a new paradigm in our cooperation, with a strategic focus that launches new projects with cumulative effect, high visibility and impact, for achievable goals and deliverables. The programme will include disaster risk management and recovery, trade and investment as well as de-risking and the areas of Health, Statistics and ICT in line with priorities of the CARICOM Strategic Plan 2015-2019 and the global development agenda.

Warmly welcome the offer of 150 scholarships for training Caribbean teachers of Spanish as a second language, which will further our ties and allow for better communication amongst our peoples.

Encourage the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency (CAHFSA) and the Mexican Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA) to conclude as a matter of priority their negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding which will facilitate information sharing and promote trade, within the framework of mutual cooperation.

Welcome the high-level participation since 2015 in the Top Business Forum from Latin America and the Greater Caribbean (Foro de Cancún), which is a significant platform for generating synergy, exploring new opportunities and increasing business between our nations.

Reinforce investment and trade between Mexico and the Caribbean through strategic activities led by ProMéxico and the Investment Promotion Agencies in the Caribbean, in keeping with the MOU signed in 2015. For instance, we reassert our commitment to strengthen cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels focusing on investment, trade facilitation and capacity building. Furthermore, as a result of the synergy and business opportunities originated from our high-level participation in the Cancun Forum since 2015, we salute the proposal to host the Top Business Forum from Latin America and the Greater Caribbean (Foro de Cancún) in 2018 as a cooperation-trade-investment initiative that will contribute to our joint economic development.

Reaffirm their commitment to a rules-based multilateral trading system with development at its centre and to work on areas of mutual interest in order to achieve

meaningful outcomes at the WTO Ministerial Conference (MC11) which is to be held on 10-13 December 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Appreciate the valuable participation of Mexico in the past three editions of the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA).

Extend a permanent invitation to Mexico, as a fellow Greater Caribbean Country, to continue participating in the future editions of CARIFESTA in order to deepen cultural ties and understanding between our peoples.

Express our gratitude to the Government and People of Belize and to the authorities of Belize City for their hospitality and support in organizing the Fourth CARICOM-Mexico Summit.