



**CARICOM**



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**STATEMENT BY**

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF OF  
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**

**AT THE**

**33<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA**

**DURING THE 64<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**New York, 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2009**

***FINAL TEXT***




Mr. Chairman,

- I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We thank the Government of Sudan for its leadership of the Group of 77 and China during 2009 at this particularly difficult juncture in history.
- Indeed, your chairmanship has coincided with an inauspicious era; the world is struggling to come to terms with the worst financial crisis in several decades resulting in an unprecedented global economic slowdown; anthropogenic climate change threatens to derail our development gains and dampen our future prospects. These are undoubtedly dire times. Never before has developing countries been so severely tested by multiple global challenges of such scale and magnitude. The scope and enormity of the challenges we presently confront far exceed our limited capacities.
- As Small Island developing states with open economies, CARICOM countries have been severely impacted by the current financial crisis, which threatens to decimate our already fragile economies. The cascading effects continue to be felt in various sectors, not the least of which are tourism, a major foreign exchange earner, and commodities. We are now faced with a steep increase in unemployment and a sharp decline in remittances.
- While reports have pointed to signs of recovery in the developed world, the lagging effects on the economies of CARICOM States will last a very long time. Our situation is compounded by virtue of the fact that most of us are classified as middle-income countries, which essentially deprives us of concessionary financing from the multilateral financial institutions even in this time of crisis.
- We welcomed the Outcome of the recent UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development which from our viewpoint was only the beginning of a process, a process which finally involves developing countries in global economic affairs. One lesson that we hope has been learnt from this crisis is that the United Nations, all 192 Member States, have an important role to play in advancing the development agenda. The G77 and China has a particularly important role to play in ensuring that the status quo ante does not prevail. We must continue to send a strong message that it cannot be "business-as-usual".

Mr. Chairman,

- We are grappling with another crisis which challenges our inalienable right to exist. As Small Island developing states, ensconced in the Caribbean Sea, climate change has been wreaking havoc on our vulnerable countries. Climate change undermines the achievement of our development goals and more importantly poses a risk to our physical and economic survival.

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- Frequent and increasingly intense hurricanes pose serious challenges, resulting in loss of lives, major damage to our country's infrastructure as well as to the key sectors of our economies including tourism and agriculture, thus reversing significant development gains achieved over many years. In the last few years, several of our countries have been battered by severe hurricanes from which we are yet to fully recover. Sea-level rise, coastal erosion, soil salinisation, coral bleaching are but a few other adverse effects from climate change with which our countries continue to grapple.
  - As a region at the forefront of the brunt of the impacts of climate change, the 14 million people in CARICOM have a common interest in a successful outcome. It is our view that success at Copenhagen will be determined by the scope and ambition of the agreement; whether it takes into account the needs and concerns of the most vulnerable countries including SIDS and LDCs. We can no longer afford the luxury of vacillation as failure to act in an expeditious manner will only result in our collective demise. Collective action is not an option but rather an imperative.

Mr. Chairman,

- The challenges we face are both complex and daunting. Our strength lies not in our collective size but rather in our unity and solidarity as a group. This is our moment of reckoning. In order for us to prevail, we must seek to build bridges that unite us; not walls that divide us. We must focus on the values and principles around which we can all coalesce.
- We must continue to advance our development objectives through various means including South-south cooperation. Through South-south cooperation, we can consolidate and multiply the gains that each individual country can achieve. We look forward to pursuing our interests at the forthcoming High-level Conference on South-south cooperation to be held later this year in Kenya.
- While we all have diverse interests, let us all commit to maintain our cohesiveness and unified stance, the core principles upon which the Group is premised. You can continue to rely on the support and cooperation of CARICOM in this regard.
- I thank you Mr. Chairman.