PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

ON
AGENDA ITEM 15: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

AND

AGENDA ITEM 19 (A) – (C): GLOBALIZATION AND INTERDEPENDENCE

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FINAL TEXT

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver these remarks on behalf of the fourteen (14) member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Cuba on behalf of the G77 and China and thank the Secretary-General for the reports provided.

CARICOM has long grappled with economic diversification challenges, as many of our economies are overly reliant on a few industries, leaving us vulnerable to external shocks and limiting productivity. Overcoming these hurdles has been hindered by constraints like capacity, resources, skills, and finances. We recognize the potential of Information and communications technologies to transform our sub-region and strengthen various sectors, thereby playing a pivotal role in our sustainable development. Initiatives like the CARICOM Regional Strategic Plan 2015-2019, the Single CARICOM ICT Space, and the CARICOM Digital Agenda 2025 underscore its significance. To ensure economic sustainability, we must build resilient infrastructure, particularly in the wake of the

COVID-19 pandemic and the escalation of global conflicts and crises, which have exacerbated deficiencies in education, healthcare, and public services. A robust foundation is essential for sustainable societies.

Mr. Chairman,

At the January high-level meeting on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health in SIDS, convened in Barbados, alarming statistics were shared, indicating that: over half of SIDS residents die prematurely from NCDs, with ten small island states having the world's highest obesity rates. SIDS are also projected to have the highest diabetes prevalence, and mental health conditions affect up to 15% in the Caribbean and Pacific. If SIDS are to achieve the third SDG, then mammoth steps must be taken to address the deficiencies of the healthcare system in SIDS. The introduction of ICTs creates a more robust and resilient healthcare system that can directly benefit women and girls. Empowering women, girls, and marginalized groups through quality education, training, and

healthcare via ICTs is fundamental, and CARICOM endorses any course of action that eliminates inequalities in all forms.

Mr. Chairman,

Investing in advanced early warning systems, real-time data collection, and communication networks can save lives and minimize the impact of disasters on SIDS. The 2022 Global Status Report revealed that countries with substantive-to-comprehensive early warnings coverage have disaster mortality eight times lower than countries with limited coverage and investing US$800 million in early warning systems in developing countries would prevent losses of $3 to $16 billion annually. It is in this context that CARICOM fully supports the work of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) as they work assiduously to ensure more lives and livelihoods can be saved through early warning systems by the end of 2027.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM acknowledges the cost of implementing ICTs and emphasizes the need for universal Internet accessibility, with 2.7 billion people globally still unconnected, as reported by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 2022. CARICOM appreciates ITU's efforts in bridging the digital divide, aligning with its vision for a more prosperous and inclusive Caribbean region.

Furthermore, recognizing the transformative effect that digitalization and the use of ICTs can have on our economies, we also acknowledge the potential risks of conflict and cyberconflict to undermine security and stability. To this end, CARICOM continues to advocate for the security of our digital assets and infrastructure through resourcing and training to protect our digital domains towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda. We call for robust policies to strengthen cybersecurity defenses and empower small island nations to safeguard their digital sectors.

Mr. Chairman,

Globalization has brought tremendous benefits to many, but it has

also ushered in unequal challenges in its wake, and created and exacerbated deep imbalances. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has faced an increasingly competitive global environment, and exposure to further risks as we navigate the management of our unique vulnerabilities and an indifferent international governance architecture. The differentiated impacts, particularly on our small island developing states, call for increased cooperation and enhanced development support, across all three dimensions.

We recognize the role of Science, technology and innovation (STI), along with ICTs, in providing sustainable solutions to overcome our challenges and accelerate sustainable development. In the post pandemic world, there is an urgent need for support to leverage STI, including frontier technologies, for resilient recovery and as building blocks for realizing sustainable economic growth and diversification. CARICOM emphasizes the need for international investment in capacity-building and technology transfer, to bolster our ability to strengthen national and regional systems and respond and adapt to

rapid technological advancements.

In addition, the balance of diversity and commonalities within the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has been a major determinant in the unique identity and evolution of the sub-region. As we continue to encounter global trade challenges, CARICOM attaches significant importance to developing and harnessing culture as a strategic sector in the achievement of our sustainable development goals. We have also voiced calls for support for the establishment of a SIDS repository of cultural identity, knowledge and traditions to enhance collaboration.

Developing countries, such as middle-income countries and small island developing states, have to contend with manifold impediments to sustainable development. In CARICOM's considered view, development cooperation must prioritize the diverse needs of countries, in their specific contexts in order to provide more tailored and coherent support. In light of the constraints to growth, development and investment, it is imperative that an enhanced response comprise, *inter alia,* implementation of the

Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, reform of the global financial architecture, as well as the establishment of a dedicated debt treatment mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, at this pivotal juncture, we are acutely aware of both the immense potential and profound challenges that lie ahead in our developmental journey. CARICOM remains steadfast in its commitment to transformational change, working in tandem with all stakeholders in key sectors for sustainable development, to realize our shared vision of a more prosperous and inclusive Caribbean region.

Thank you.