

**Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade  
Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014  
on the  
Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and  
Caribbean States (CELAC)  
Havana, Cuba, 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

**Introduction**

This Statement addresses the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) which was held in Havana, Cuba 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> January 2014. It will be recalled that in January last year, following the convening of the First Summit in Chile, at which I represented the Prime Minister, I reported on the outcome of our deliberations and the significance of Jamaica's membership in this new regional integration mechanism which, for the first time now includes all thirty-three countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Jamaica's delegation to the Second Summit was led by Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller and included the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, the Permanent Secretaries and other Officials in the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. Jamaica's Mission in Cuba, under the leadership of Ambassador A'Dale Robinson, provided valuable support and advice to the Jamaican delegation.

**Significance of the Summit and CELAC's Continued Relevance**

The convening of the Summit in the Caribbean and the chairmanship of Cuba over the past year brought CELAC closer home to the Caribbean and provided an opportunity for more active participation by CARICOM countries in the various activities coordinated by Cuba, including in education, health, international cooperation, natural disasters and energy. It may be recalled that Jamaica hosted in

Montego Bay in November 2013, the Second Meeting of CELAC Energy Ministers from which emanated the Montego Bay Declaration and Plan of Action. Jamaica also attended other meetings of interest.

This Second Summit of CELAC emphasized the gradual development of the organization into a credible forum for dialogue and consensus-building and for promoting and expanding regional cooperation and collaboration, amidst the diversity of the membership of the group. It created an opportunity also to address differences, and to work towards greater understanding and strengthening of the bonds of friendship uniting the CELAC family of nations, which demonstrates the evolving maturity of the group.

From Jamaica's perspective, the meeting allowed for frank and open discussion on issues of importance to CELAC member states and to chart a course forward. The outcome documents, in which Jamaica had an input, adequately covered priority issues for the Caribbean sub-region.

### **Preparatory Meetings**

The Summit was preceded by the Seventh Meeting of National Coordinators of CELAC on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> and the Fourth Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the 27<sup>th</sup> January. These meetings addressed the main documents of the Summit:

- The Draft Havana Declaration and accompanying Action Plan 2014; and
- Special Draft Declarations proposed by Member States

The meeting of National Coordinators considered the draft outcome documents for the Summit in preparation for the Meetings of Foreign Ministers and Heads of State and Government.

### **Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs**

The meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was conducted under the chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Cuba, H.E. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, and included in the opening segment, a presentation from the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the

Caribbean (ECLAC), Ms. Alicia Barcena. Ms. Barcena's Statement spoke specifically to the sustainable and equitable use of the region's natural resources, and in broader terms, directed attention to the "economic and social panorama" of Latin America and the Caribbean, pointing to achievements, challenges and outlook for the future.

The meeting received a Report from Cuba on its stewardship of the organisation during the past year, for which it was commended.

Ministers discussed the Havana Declaration, the Plan of Action and Special Draft Declarations and made recommendations for the consideration of Heads of State and Government. In leading Jamaica's delegation to this meeting of Foreign Ministers, I was particularly interested in the special concerns and interests of Jamaica and the Caribbean, as well as general issues related to advancing regional growth and development, the promotion of South/South cooperation and ensuring that the outcome documents reflected our positions. In this regard, particular attention was paid to the Draft Special Declarations submitted by Jamaica, namely:

- The Challenges of Middle Income Countries (MICs) - presented jointly with Antigua and Barbuda;
- The Situation of Small Island Developing States (SIDs);
- A Permanent Memorial in Honour of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade;

With regard to the *Challenges of Middle Income Countries*, Antigua and Barbuda joined with Jamaica's submission, highlighting the related challenges of graduation and the impact on highly indebted middle income countries. The Special Declaration recognized, inter alia, the vulnerability of MICs and their limitations to accessing concessionary funding and Official Development Assistance to pursue their social and economic development goals, due to their present categorization.

The Declaration urged development partners to devise indicators which would reflect more accurately the reality of MICs, in particular, taking into account the peculiarities of Caribbean states and the fact that current criteria, especially the per capita income criterion, do not reflect the multi-dimensional effects of poverty and inequality.

International Financial Institutions were also urged, in the wake of the financial and economic crisis and the serious impact of climate change, to review their policies and to explore ways of allowing small heavily indebted MICs access to loans under sustainable and favourable conditions.

The situation of *Small Island Developing States* followed on Jamaica's submission at the First CELAC Summit in Chile. The Special Declaration reiterated the peculiar situation of SIDs and the need to build resilience in these countries through technology transfer, capacity-building and human resource development.

In recalling the preparatory meeting held in Jamaica in July 2013, I requested CELAC's support for the Third International Conference on SIDs to be held in Samoa later this year, as an appropriate space for reinvigorating international commitment to a global partnership that will enable SIDs to combat poverty, build resilience and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

In highlighting the initiative of erecting a *Permanent Memorial in Honour of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, the Special Declaration recalled the tragedy and horrors of the inhuman system of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. I sought the endorsement of CELAC Member States of the CARICOM Initiative, led by Jamaica, to erect in a place of prominence and accessibility at the United Nations Headquarters, a permanent memorial in honour of the victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade and encouraged Member States to make contributions towards the establishment of the fund for the memorial.

I commended to the meeting the adoption of the Declarations, all of which were approved.

*Other Special Declarations* submitted by *CARICOM* covered:

- Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management;
- Illegal and unregulated Fishing;
- Reparations for Slavery and Native Genocide;

- The Nationality ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic which has affected a large number of Dominicans, predominantly those of Haitian descent;

With regard to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, in addition to underlining the importance of obtaining new and additional financial resources for mitigating the effects of climate change, Jamaica drew attention to the 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Kingston last October, which was recognized as an important development to include in the Declaration.

Concerning the Constitutional Ruling by the Dominican Republic, my colleague Ministers and I engaged in an open and comprehensive discussion on the subject, with Statements made by almost all CARICOM representatives, highlighting the fact that it was not a migration nor a bilateral issue but a violation of human rights, which should be reflected in the outcome documents of the Summit. We also urged redress by the Dominican Republic in ensuring that full citizenship rights are guaranteed for persons affected by the ruling.

In my intervention I referred to the Statement issued by CARICOM and my own public pronouncements on the issue on behalf of Jamaica. I expressed the view that CELAC could not resile from the obligation to address this important issue and to find balanced and acceptable language to resolve a matter of conflict within the LAC family of nations. The matter received widespread support at the level of Foreign Ministers and was recommended for further discussion at the Summit level.

Also of importance in the ministerial discussions was the agreement that the Steering Committee of CELAC, referred to as the “Extended Troika” (i.e. the current, future and outgoing chairs, plus CARICOM) would now be designated the “Quartet”, cementing CARICOM’s participation on the Committee and ensuring its inclusiveness.

## **The Summit**

The Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) was held under the chairmanship of H.E. Raul Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, under the theme: **The Struggle against Hunger, Poverty, and Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

All thirty-three (33) CELAC states were represented, underlining the importance attached to the encounter. The meeting was addressed by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and the OAS Secretary General H.E. Miguel Insulza, the latter a historic occurrence marking the first visit to Cuba of a Secretary- General of the OAS since Cuba's suspension from the organization in 1962.

In the General Debate which followed the Opening Ceremony, Prime Minister Simpson Miller, in addressing the theme of the Summit drew attention to the following main points:

- Persistent factors which have contributed to poverty, hunger and inequality in the region, including high level of indebtedness, challenges with the delivery of social services, fiscal constraints and external shocks such as the global financial and economic crisis;
- Notwithstanding the courageous efforts being made by governments and the progress made in some areas, more needs to be done to tackle the structural challenges to address the region's vulnerabilities and to spur growth and development.
- The deleterious effects of Climate Change and the fact that a single natural disaster can wipe out years of hard-won gains.
- Measures taken by Jamaica to address the issue of poverty, focusing on the most vulnerable groups, with steady progress in areas such as education, health, housing, sports and culture, water and sanitation, infrastructure; programmes such as PATH serve to create a social safety net for the most disadvantaged;
- The need to have a transformational approach to tackling poverty, hunger and inequality, taking into account the limitations of countries in the region, in particular Middle Income Countries; and

- The importance of South/South Cooperation, particularly among CELAC countries, as a vehicle to address the development challenges of Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Outcome Documents

Heads of State and Government reviewed the Draft **Havana Declaration and Action Plan** as well as the **Special Declarations** submitted by Member States and, following their discussions, adopted the final documents. The Declaration, which contains a detailed set of priorities for CELAC, covers a wide range of issues of special interest to Jamaica including:

- Commitment to *the regional integration process* and the values and principles underpinning CELAC and its membership, bearing in mind the importance of the organization in consolidating consensus on issues of regional interest and the scope for regional collaboration and cooperation at all levels.
- A pledge to *promote growth and sustainable development in CELAC member states* by adopting policies which support productivity and development, as well as employment creation and the eradication of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, inequality and social exclusion.
- The design and implementation of national plans, policies and programmes aimed at the universal enjoyment and exercise of economic, social and cultural rights with *priority attention to highly vulnerable sectors* and *those living in extreme poverty*, including the disabled, elderly, youth and migrants.
- Commitment towards ensuring the *human right to food and nutritional security* and support for the 2025 Hunger Free Latin American and Caribbean Initiative.
- Recognition of the *vulnerability of Caribbean States* and the need for actions aimed at assisting these countries to overcome their peculiar challenges and vulnerabilities.

- Commitment to the ongoing *reconstruction and development process in Haiti*.
- The need for a *Regional Strategic Agenda on Disaster Risk Management* which should include in the relevant Plan of Action, coordination of risk estimation and reduction, preparedness, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.
- Reaffirmation of the importance of the *post-2015 Development Agenda* which requires new additional and predictable financial resources, technology development and transfer as well as capacity – building in developing countries. The Agenda should be universal and flexible enough to support the goal of developing countries to eradicate poverty.
- Recognition of the adverse impact of *climate change*, particularly on small island developing states and the need for international cooperation to properly address the issue.
- Commitment to address the *drug addiction* problem in CELAC member states through strengthening scientific research to develop antidotes and treatments.
- The importance of *foreign direct investment flows* to the region which should lead to the improvement of the quality of life for citizens.
- Affirmation of the benefits of *Information and Communication Technologies* and the need for international cooperation to prevent their misuse so as to preserve the sovereignty and security of states and the privacy of individuals, bearing in mind steps taken by the United Nations in this regard.

- The need for adequate *CELAC representation at the highest level in the United Nations System* on the basis of equitable geographical representation.
- Reiteration of the need for a comprehensive *reform of the UN system*, especially the democratization of international decision-making, including in the Security Council.
- The issue of **migration and its link to development**.
- The important *role of Culture in Human development*.

The Declaration also includes support for the *EU-CELAC process*, noting that the Second EU/LAC Summit is scheduled to be held in Brussels in 2015 to continue discussions on the bi-regional strategic partnership between the European Union Commission and Council and its Member States, on the one hand, and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, on the other.

Twenty-two (22) *Special Declarations* were adopted, seven (7) of which were tabled by CARICOM States, including the three (3) submissions by Jamaica.

Other *Special Declarations* which focused on issues of relevance and interest to CARICOM include the Declaration of **Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace**; illicit trafficking in **small arms and weapons**; strengthening regional integration; equality and the empowerment of women; migration and the **international drug problem**. Jamaica also expressed *solidarity with Cuba* for an end to the economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by the United States.

### **Other Issues**

The Havana Declaration also reflected serious concerns regarding the situation in Syria and underscored the importance of an inclusive political process based on the

principles of sovereignty, independence, self-determination, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs.

The establishment of the CELAC–China Forum as well as a Dialogue Mechanism with the Russian Federation demonstrated the pro-active approach taken by the organisation to develop alliances and partnerships outside of the region which can be mutually beneficial. Discussions have also been held with the Republic of Korea, the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States, Turkey, and Japan.

The meeting noted the passing on 5<sup>th</sup> March 5 2013 of the former President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez Frias, describing him as one of the chief promoters and founders of CELAC and as “a relentless humanist and champion of Latin American and Caribbean unity, who fought against social exclusion and poverty and fostered integral development in the region”.

### **Pro Tempore Presidency**

President Raul Castro Ruz handed over the Pro Tempore Presidency to H.E. Laura Chinchilla, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, who will host the next summit. Ecuador is slated to host in 2015, the Dominican Republic in 2016 and Bolivia in 2017.

### **Going Forward**

There is no doubt that CELAC has attracted international attention, creating a strong and visible presence in various fora, where its potential impact as a force in global decision-making and international cooperation is gradually being recognized. The organization’s two years of existence have been dedicated to the institutionalisation and consolidation of the Bloc and strengthening regional cooperation efforts. It is expected that by the Third Summit, more concrete initiatives towards addressing the challenges of the region will emerge. The process of engaging extra-regional partners has already been initiated. It was strengthened during Cuba’s presidency and this should gain momentum in the coming months.

Costa Rica has announced the first set of meetings it will organise in its capacity as pro tempore president:

- First Ministerial Conference on Production and Development (March) ;
- Working Group on the Environment;
- Workshop on Food Security (date to be announced);
- The Second Meeting of Senior Officials on Science and Technology (April);
- Third Meeting of Ministers of Energy (date to be announced);

CARICOM'S involvement in the steering committee, currently represented by St. Vincent and the Grenadines as Chair of CARICOM, has given our sub-region an opportunity to be more involved in decision-making and to promote our interests. Meaningful participation in the various meetings and a strategic approach are crucial to influencing outcomes and ensuring optimum benefit for the region.

Jamaica looks forward to participating with great zeal in the year of activities emerging from the current Action Plan.