

STATEMENT BY

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AMBASSADOR / PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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



DURING

**THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION
OF
THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
OF
THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE
CARIBBEAN (ECLAC)**

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Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to address this Twenty-Sixth Session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) namely, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. CARICOM wishes to be associated with the statement delivered by Ambassador Errazuriz, Permanent Representative of Chile, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CARICOM joins colleagues in extending congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of your Bureau from Cuba, Grenada and Mexico respectively, and to wish you well in the execution of your duties.

CARICOM also welcomes the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Ms. Alicia Barcena, to New York and I wish to register the Group's appreciation for the briefings which she provides to Latin American and Caribbean delegations whenever she is in town. Her presentation to the Committee of the Whole earlier this morning on the "Economic and Social Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean and outlook for 2012" provided a broad overview of the socio-economic situation of ECLAC Member States.

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to acknowledge, on behalf of CARICOM, the presence of Mrs. Diane Quarless, who assumed duties as Director of the ECLAC Sub-Regional Office in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in November 2011, and to convey to her our sincere congratulations and best wishes for a successful tenure. We have every confidence in her ability to ensure that the priorities of the Caribbean sub-region remain central to the work of ECLAC.

We wish to place on record the high level of importance which CARICOM Member States ascribe to the Sub-regional Office and to ensuring that it is provided with the resources which will enable it to effectively address the concerns of the Member States it services. In this regard, of particular significance are the activities of the Office in relation to its support which it provides in contributing to enhancing the statistical capacity and expertise of Governments in the region; measuring progress towards the achievement of Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); its contribution to the important body of work on the implications of climate change for the vulnerable Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the sub-region; its activities in support of the Barbados Plan of Action for the sustainable Development of SIDS and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (BPoA) of the Programme of Action for SIDS (MSI) and its activities in relation to natural disaster risk reduction. In this connection, we must also highlight the invaluable work of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) and its central role in advancing development cooperation within the sub-region. We also acknowledge the importance of the Regional Coordinating Mechanism which is tasked with monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21, BPoA and MSI in the sub-region. However, I believe we would all agree that the success of the CDCC and its Regional Coordinating Mechanism are contingent on the provision of the adequate financial and human resources.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM regards the ECLAC Sub-regional Office in Port-of-Spain as central to the work and presence of the United Nations in the Caribbean and wishes to maintain that it constitutes a mechanism through which such activities can be effectively streamlined and leveraged to the benefit of the peoples throughout the length and breadth of the region. In this connection, we must acknowledge the invaluable support that ECLAC and its Sub-regional office have provided to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean as we have sought to prepare for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). This major conference will take place in our region and it is therefore important that the wide-ranging concerns of the

countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are addressed as the international community endeavours to secure a future that is truly sustainable.

Mr. Chairman,

We acknowledge the progress which we have made in Latin America and the Caribbean in reducing poverty levels and reducing the levels of inequality which have been characteristic of our countries for far too long. However, there remain many social and economic challenges to which we must attend if we are to avoid reversing the gains which we have made in these areas. The size and openness of the small economies in our region continue to undermine our ability to withstand external shocks and have contributed to the fact that recovery from the global financial crisis has been uneven and growth in CARICOM has generally been much slower than that experienced by our Latin American neighbours. In this connection, we welcome the efforts which ECLAC has made in recent years to reflect the variations in economic progress and challenges within the Latin American and Caribbean group of countries and look forward to continuing to engage with ECLAC to ensure that accurate, up-to-date data continue to be available on the sub-region in publications, as well as in presentations on Latin America and the Caribbean broadly speaking. Undoubtedly, the Sub-regional office in Port-of-Spain has a central role to play in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

The Member States of CARICOM look forward to attending and actively participating in two very important meetings which will take place in Guyana at the end of May. Indeed, we welcome the convening of the second Caribbean Development Roundtable, on 30th May 2012, and wish to acknowledge its importance as a forum through which we are able to exchange views on the most pressing development issues with which the Caribbean is confronted and endeavour to find appropriate policy solutions to these challenges. We also look forward to actively participating in the meeting of the CDCC which will take place on 31st May 2012.

The Thirty-fourth Session of the Commission, which will take place in San Salvador, El Salvador, in August of this year will provide another invaluable opportunity for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to meet to exchange perspectives. You can be assured, Mr. Chairman, that CARICOM delegations will be well represented at that meeting.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, CARICOM wishes to reiterate its support for ECLAC and to underscore its readiness to lend its voice to ensure that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and its sub-regional offices are provided with the level of support needed within the context of the UN system, particularly in the face of the budgetary and other challenges which are being faced by the UN's development pillar.

I thank you.