



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

BY

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MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SERVICES OF
THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

AT THE

62ND SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ON THE PRIORITY THEME:

**‘Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to
accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable
Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication’**

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

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Madam Chair,

I have the distinct honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), at this sixty-second session of the Commission for Social Development.

We extend our warmest congratulations to you, Madame Chair, and to the other members of the bureau on being elected to steward the work of the Commission during this session. Rest assured of the support and cooperation of our delegations.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madam Chair,

Nearly 30 years ago, the international community took a decisive step by placing people at the heart of development. The commitments which were made at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 remain very much as relevant today, as they were nearly three decades ago. In this connection, CARICOM reaffirms our commitment to fulfilling the goals and objectives outlined in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

CARICOM takes note of the proposal by the Secretary-General to convene a World Social Summit in 2025 which would serve as an opportunity to review the gaps and progress in advancing a people-centered approach to development, as called for in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as provide the impetus for accelerating action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Madam Chair,

Every year, since 2008, we commemorate World Day of Social Justice on February 20. As we approach the commemoration of this year's observance, we recall that social development and social justice are essential for the attainment and maintenance of peace and security. We certainly must also recall the pivotal role which social development and social justice play in poverty eradication. In this connection, CARICOM Member States welcome the priority theme for this year's Commission "Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication".

Madam Chair,

Social justice is one of the many facets that impact development. It plays an intrinsic role in improving the well-being of individuals and restoring human dignity, particularly, for those who are in vulnerable situations. Social justice spans various sectors including human rights, education, housing, food security, bridging the digital divide, equal pay for work of equal value and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

While the world continues to face ever-increasing challenges, climate change continues to be one of the greatest challenges which disproportionately affects our region. As Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the effects of climate change have stymied our development trajectory and continues to reverse the hard-won gains in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals. Climate change is intertwined with rising inequalities, within and among countries. For us, social justice includes climate justice. We are among the most vulnerable, but least responsible. It is therefore imperative that we collectively address the social, economic and environmental impacts of climate change with alacrity.

Madam Chair,

We are at a critical juncture in this decade of action wherein we must scale up efforts to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. CARICOM once again reiterates that unprecedented times call for an unprecedented response from the international community. We therefore stress the crucial need for North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, to support national efforts aimed at building resilience, reducing inequalities and alleviating poverty, and to realize the commitments made in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, and those contained in the 2030 Agenda.

Additionally, CARICOM reiterates the call for urgent action from the international community to reform the international financial architecture and to facilitate an enabling environment for developing countries to actively participate in and benefit from the global economy. The Multi-Vulnerability Index and the Bridgetown Initiative, which have found consensus among CARICOM must be vigorously pursued.

Madam Chair,

As we pursue the acceleration of efforts to implement the SDGs, we welcome the convening of the Summit of the Future. It is our hope that a comprehensive and robust outcome may be obtained which would foster a common future of sustainable development, peace and the full respect of human rights for all.

Madam Chair,

The synergies between SDG 10 and social justice must propel us to make strident efforts to tailor our social development policies to be more resilient, more inclusive and tailored to the ever evolving demands of our societies. We must invest in human capital if we are to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions. To this end, we commend the work of the Commission for Social Development and reaffirm our support.

Madam Chair,

In closing, CARICOM Member States reiterate our commitments to building resilient societies and economies through inclusive social development policies. The future we want and the future we need requires significant investments in human capital. We look forward to further engagements during this session, as we endeavor to accelerate progress on the implementation of the SDGs.

Thank you. God bless you!