

Statement on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on the occasion of the Ministerial Segment of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the fourteen (14) Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Ecuador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Maldives on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CARICOM recalls the decision taken at the Rio + 20 Conference to establish a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum (HLPF) on sustainable development to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). We therefore take this opportunity to commend the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for convening the second Forum following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

CARICOM also believes that the theme of the 2017 Forum “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world” is an appropriate

one for the second meeting for the Forum charged with responsibility for the integrated follow-up and review of Agenda 2030. Also the goals to be reviewed in depth are important, especially Goal 17 on the Revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development built upon inclusive principles and values, a shared vision and shared goals that place people and the planet at the center. Urgent action is needed to mobilize, redirect and unlock the transformative power of trillions of dollars of private sector resources to deliver on sustainable development objectives. The Forum also affords Member States the opportunity to take stock of the work needed to be undertaken and to calibrate their approach to ensure the full implementation of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In that connection, CARICOM notes with satisfaction that 44 countries will be presenting their Voluntary National Reviews at the Forum, including a member of our CARICOM Community.

Mr. President,

CARICOM Heads of State and Government have long argued that the essential requirements for sustainable development are poverty eradication, the promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development.

We recognize that this will require the promotion of sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, the creation of greater opportunities for all and the reduction of inequalities within and among countries.

We are also of the view that sustainable finance is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Our collective focus must therefore be on how financial markets can be aligned with sustainable development and on identifying concrete ways of financing implementation of the Goals.

In this regard, the high debt to GDP ratio of CARICOM member States erodes their capacity to successfully implement 2030 Agenda. Indeed, despite ~~our~~ middle-income status attained by a ~~good~~ number of our member States and, our relatively high placement on the UNDP human development index, as a region we remain burdened by the small *sizes* and extreme vulnerabilities of our economies, limitations that are exacerbated by the lack of product and market diversification, vulnerability to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.

Permit me also to highlight here the issue of the termination of correspondent banking relations in the region as this similarly has the potential to threaten our economic stability and capacity to remain

properly integrated into the global financial, trade and economic systems.

Mr. President,

For Small Island Developing States and States with low-lying coastlands such as ours, implementation of the 2030 Agenda cannot be divorced from the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway- our sustainable development blueprint. We note with appreciation the continued fulfilment of one of the mandates of the HLPF, namely, the provision of adequate time and sufficient attention to Small Island Developing States and their sustainable development.

As CARICOM Member States stated during last week's SIDS segment, the global goals have been designed to work in an integrated and indivisible manner, aligned to national priorities and anchored in our national plans.

As many of our member States work towards the finalization of this integration process, the criticality of high-quality, reliable and timely data and analysis must be emphasized. We therefore reiterate our call for dedicated support for strengthening national statistical systems and offices to improve the collection and disaggregation of data.

In closing, Mr President, we would like to share with this Assembly the fact that CARICOM Heads of Government held their annual Conference just a week ago and remain committed to implementing Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development evidenced by consensus on a number of issues to reduce poverty and promote economic growth and social well-being, including cooperation in the areas of human resource development with the provision of basic education, health, particularly in the case of non-communicable diseases, harnessing the transformative possibilities of ICT and most of all public and private sector financing for development.

In support of these initiatives, the member States of CARICOM call on the United Nations system to strengthen its support for national development priorities aimed at full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and leaving no one behind.

I thank you.