

external change on our socio-economic and political traditions. For years, Caribbean countries have warned that the strict adherence by great powers to the new gospels of globalization and trade liberalization, without taking cognizance of the special circumstances of small states like ours, threatened us with marginalization and exclusion. Those days are now upon us.

Democracy in the Caribbean is now threatened by the hundreds rendered unemployed through the doctrine of trade liberalization. It is attacked by the consuming fires of drug addiction, and the monopoly that drug czars and traders enjoy over the means of violence. It is undermined by the anger of disaffected youth and the disillusionment of the impoverished in the countryside. It is compromised by our preoccupation with maintaining law and order, at the expense of fighting poverty and social degradation.

Mr. Chairman, our message is simple: merely engaging in regular electoral exercises is not enough. Even the strongest traditions of democracy will pale in the face of overwhelming poverty, social exclusion and economic marginalization.

As surely as night follows day, human rights violations by states, though always unacceptable, will follow the human wrongs of the global economic system.

There are those who say that democracy brings prosperity, but democracy is compromised if the economic policies it champions deepen and accelerate poverty. Until we can wipe out poverty in this hemisphere, we cannot claim to have built successful democracies. Until the hemisphere as a whole can enjoy the fruits of trade liberalization, we cannot proclaim its glories. Until all the peoples of the Americas are free from hunger and free from the fear of unemployment, we cannot celebrate the benefits of trade liberalization. True, trade liberalization may bring new prosperity for some, but we must be honest and admit that it will destroy the lives of others.

It is in this spirit of concern about the fate of our democratic cultures that Saint Lucia and CARICOM approach this summit. We urge greater understanding on the part of our larger neighbours of the new economic and social realities that endanger our democracies and undermine our development aspirations. The problems, exacerbated by these new realities, must be tackled by all the states of the Americas. Recognition of the special circumstances of small democracies is not about compassion. It is about economic necessity, survival and security.

The opportunity now exists for us to create lasting structures of cooperation and to develop a genuine hemispheric approach to resolving our common trade and development issues. We are excited by the new possibilities for cooperation that the Summit process brings us. Let us all together build on the foundation that our emerging democratic traditions proclaim, so that we can deliver to the peoples of the Americas the futures they desire and deserve.

