

Address by the Honourable Kenneth Anthony Prime Minister of Saint Lucia

On behalf of the Saint Lucia delegation, the delegations of the English-speaking Caribbean, and the delegations of the CARICOM subregion, I wish to thank you for the warm and friendly welcome, and for the professional and efficient arrangements that the support staff of this summit have afforded to our delegations. The people of Canada have demonstrated amply to us that there is no effective correlation between temperature and temperament.

I speak today on behalf of the people of CARICOM — a people who come from the smallest and most vulnerable states of this hemisphere — but I address you on behalf of a community of states that enjoys one of the proudest and strongest traditions of democracy in the Americas.

Democracy in the states of the Caribbean Community was born in the struggles of the working classes for justice and recognition of workers' rights. It was nurtured in the crucibles of our movements for self-governance and self-determination. It has flowered in these early years of our postcolonial history; it has blossomed as we continue to grapple with the task of governing our own affairs and charting our own destiny.

There are those who are confounded by Caribbean democracy. How could a region of so many small states continue with an unbroken record of a vibrant democracy, despite the pressures of poverty, economic hardship and limited size and resources? Yes, we have had our blemishes, but democracy in the Caribbean community is a living, breathing thing and Caribbean people are so attached to its traditions that it is largely taken for granted.

We have no anxieties about our democratic track record. We harbour no feelings of guilt with respect to our commitment to human rights and the rule of law. There is no democracy clause in our regional integration schemes because Caribbean people do not expect anything else from our governments.

We have learned, Mr. Chairman, that democracy cannot be imposed. It has to be planted, allowed to germinate and to flower. There are societies in our midst whose experience with democracy is recent. While democracy will have core values, its manifestations will differ from country to country. Our business is to assist those countries as they struggle to create and establish institutions to sustain their fledgling democracies over time. President Bush has just reminded us, "democracy is a journey, not a destination." These words should have resonance for all of us as we cast judgement on our emerging democracies.

Mr. Chairman, recent experiences, however, have brought home to us some sobering realities about the sustainability of democracy in our societies. Our democratic traditions are being challenged, not by our internal policy failures, but by the effects of