

FIRST OF ALL, WE MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ARE NOT ENVISAGED. WE HAVE HEARD OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GROUP OF THREE, COMPRISING TRADE CO-OPERATION ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN COLUMBIA, MEXICO AND VENEZUELA; THE LAUNCHING OF AN INTEGRATION GROUPING OF THE SOUTHERN ZONE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA; AND THE DECLARATION OF THE ANDEAN PACT COUNTRIES. AND, ASSUREDLY, THERE WILL BE OTHER SURPRISES BEFORE THE YEAR 2000.

ALL THESE SEEM TO BE RESPONSIVE RIPPLES SET OFF BY WIDER GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS. THUS, THE CARIBBEAN WILL NOT BE LEFT UNDISTURBED BY THIS PROCESS AND IT NOW FACES A SERIOUS CHALLENGE OF IMMEDIATE ENHANCEMENT OF COLLECTIVE CAPACITY FOR RATIONAL RESPONSE TO THE CHANGES UNFOLDING AROUND THEM.

WE MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE, BOTH WITHIN AND BEYOND OUR REGION, IN NEARLY TWO DECADES. THOSE CHANGES COMPEL OUR ATTENTION. THEY IMPACT ON VIRTUALLY EVERY ASPECT OF CARIBBEAN LIFE AND RAISE QUESTION ABOUT THE ADEQUACY, EVEN THE VALIDITY, OF THE GOALS. IN THIS RESPECT IT WOULD BE RIGHT TO SAY AT THIS STAGE THAT THE CHANGING WORLD ENVIRONMENT, BOTH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL, HAS REINFORCED THE CASE FOR, AND ADDED ELEMENTS OF COMPULSION TO, THE REGION'S ASPIRATIONS FOR UNITY AND ITS FUTURE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN.