

The Honourable M. Eugenia Charles, Prime Minister of Dominica, responding on behalf of the Caribbean Community to these addresses, welcomed the priority being accorded by Canada to the region and the indication of higher levels of assistance. She emphasized the need for aid to be made available expeditiously. The Prime Minister of Dominica called for the meticulous respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of CARICOM Member States, and for the recognition that the Caribbean region is an area of peace and stability, and that the maintenance of these traditions is not only necessary for the progress and economic and social development of its people but also an indispensable element in the progress of development of the region as a whole.

Dr. Mark MacGuigan and Mr. Hugh Shearer were identified as Co-Chairmen for Canada and the Caribbean Community respectively. The talks were characterized by the cordiality which prevails in the relations between Canada and the Caribbean Community, and a basis was established for the positive resolution of outstanding issues.

In the discussion on the proposed aid package, the specific and urgent needs of the Caribbean Community were emphasized and clarification sought on a number of issues. While welcoming the announcement that Canada regarded the Commonwealth Caribbean as an area of special interest, it was emphasized that the development needs of the region warranted a higher level of aid than was being provided. The Canadian side gave the undertaking that the level of aid would be reviewed and that, at the time of the meeting of the Caribbean Group for Co-operation in Economic Development (CGCED) in June 1981, Canada might be in a position to give a more specific indication.

The CARICOM side emphasized the need for a flexible approach in the provision of balance of payments support. There was also need for consideration to be given to the special circumstances of the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) on balance of payments matters and for arrangements which would enable states to finance local costs when necessary from aid funds. The Canadian side emphasized the importance which they attached to the prior conclusion of agreements with the IMF.

The meeting endorsed the view that the formulation and implementation of projects within the framework of Canada/CARICOM cooperation should, as far as possible, be designed to involve the utilisation of indigenous expertise and national and regional institutions.

The meeting also accepted that a basic and fundamental principle that should guide Canadian assistance to the region is the attainment of the ultimate objective of removing the need for assistance and this was seen as being intimately linked to programmes and strategies for creating and fully utilising productive capacity of the region.