



Permanent Mission of Saint Lucia to the United Nations

The Ceremonial Meeting to Mark the Formal Handover of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 from the State of Palestine to the Co-Operative Republic of Guyana

Statement by

H.E. Cosmos Richardson

Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia to the United Nations
on Behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

15 January 2020

Your Excellency, Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, Prime Minister of Guyana
Your Excellency, Ms. Karen Cummings, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guyana
Your Excellency, Mr. Riad al-Maliki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State
of Palestine
Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres
President of the General Assembly; H.E. Mr. Tijani Muhammad-Bande
Distinguished Chair,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

On behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I wish to express our strong support and fraternal solidarity to the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on its ascension to the presidency of the Group of 77 and China. We are delighted that the new Chair for 2020 has come from the ranks of CARICOM States, marking the fifth time since the establishment of G-77 in 1964 that a CARICOM Member State has served as Chair and the second time for Guyana since 1999. We look forward to working collaboratively with all Member States under Guyana leadership which coincides with the seminal 75th Session of the U.N. General Assembly.

CARICOM also wishes to extend its congratulations to the State of Palestine for the fine work undertaken during the period of the Palestine presidency to advance the collective developmental interests of developing countries, building on the accomplishments of the Arab Republic of Egypt who chaired the Group in 2018.

CARICOM regards the work of G-77 as critical to the realization of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015. The Group of 77 serves as a powerful mechanism in coordinating the

collective voice of developing countries, and in enhancing joint negotiating capacity on the major international economic issues within the framework of the broader United Nations system. An ever-important role of the Group is the promotion of South-South cooperation for development - a feature which continues to serve as a valuable asset in addressing the numerous developmental challenges through the exchange of the considerable indigenous knowledge and abundance of expertise in developing countries across the globe.

The diversity of issues addressed by the G-77 in 2019 alone is especially impressive, and is indicative of the wide topics which developing countries must address in the context of the advancement of the overall sustainable development process.

It is to be recalled that the broad range of development challenges was comprehensively addressed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 during their 43rd ministerial meeting last September, following on from the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the General Assembly with specific attention paid in the ministerial communique to the critical importance of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC, the New Urban Agenda and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as major outcome documents in relation to countries in special situations in line with the principles of multilateralism and international cooperation.

Of particular note to CARICOM States is the importance attached by the Ministers in their communique to “the urgent threat of climate change” whose root has been identified on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge. Indeed, environmental and economic shocks resulting from these emerging climatic conditions “disproportionately burden all developing countries and in particular the poorest and most vulnerable” among us. The reversal of the “hard-earned developmental gains” is a highly unfortunate by-product of climate vulnerability.

These are the critical – even existential - issues for CARICOM Member States, and we regard the continued focus of the G-77 in confronting these concerns as an important priority in the development process of our region. As articulated in the ministerial communique, “the global effort to fight climate change is an irreversible process that cannot be overlooked nor postponed,” requiring “the mobilization of further action and support in line with the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, for climate change adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage.”

Within the context of the significant risk posed to SIDS by climate change, the G-77 ministerial communique maintained its recognition of SIDS as a "special case" for sustainable development. Climate change and its adverse impacts continue to pose a significant risk, not only to SIDS, but to a range of developing countries as evidence through desertification, excessive flooding, hurricanes and typhoons, and other climatic phenomena which continue to cause tragic loss of life amongst our people while serving as major impediments to the achievement of sustainable development. These conditions represent the

gravest threat to survival and viability of developing countries, including SIDS, even resulting in the loss of territory. CARICOM States are especially appreciative of the continued support by G-77 for the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway and its close interlinkages with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and look forward to accelerated efforts towards full and complete implementation in 2020.

It is within this context that CARICOM pledges its commitment to work closely with the Member States of the G-77 to face collectively the challenges before us, and look forward to working closely with our new Chair, as we advance the agenda of the G-77 within the United Nations system.

I thank you.
