



CANADA-CARICOM: Shaping a new Partnership for Recovery and Resilience

(Unofficial Summary of Discussions)

Overview

The CARICOM Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Ottawa in collaboration with the Canada-Caribbean Institute and the Latin America and Caribbean Study Group of the Canadian International Council hosted the 3rd edition of a CARICOM Policy Forum under the theme “***Shaping a New Partnership for Recovery and Resilience***” on Wednesday, May 25, 2022. The lead mission for the event was the High Commission of St. Kitts and Nevis.

The Policy Forum came just as Heads of State/Government from the region were due to join colleagues from the Americas and the Commonwealth at their respective Summits. The Policy Forum aimed to inject impetus into policy considerations as the region looks beyond the post pandemic world now characterized by competing global crises inclusive of energy and food. The Forum also sought to advance discussions touched on earlier at CARICOM-Canada Foreign Ministers Dialogue and the Trade Mission to the Caribbean led by the Hon. Mary Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export promotion, Small Business and Economic Development. The forum was aimed at key audiences including the Ottawa policy community, parliamentarians, think tankers and the Caribbean diaspora.

The event registered north of 255 participants spanning the globe.

The ***Moderators*** were:

- H.E. Sherry Tross, High Commissioner of St. Kitts and Nevis to Canada; Dean, CARICOM Group in Ottawa
- Amb. Robert Ready (ret'd), Chair of the CIC National capital Branch Latin America and Caribbean Study Group; and former Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica and the Bahamas

The ***Panelists*** were:

- Amb. Donna Forde, Assistant Secretary General, Foreign and Community Relations, CARICOM
- Ms. Therese Turner Jones, Former General Manager, Caribbean Department, IDB and now International Consultant
- Mr. Philip Jennings, Executive Director for Canada, Ireland and the Caribbean at the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Professor Andy Knight, Distinguished Professor, University of Alberta

Welcome Remarks were delivered by The Hon. Greg Fergus, P.C., MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board. Greg Fergus is also the co-chair of the Canada-CARICOM Parliamentary Friendship Group – a growing outlet for influencing and expanding the Canada-CARICOM dialogue.

THEMATIC PRIORITIES

The general theme of the forum focused on partnership, recovery, and resilience. These themes are expected to thread the coming Summitry and uncertainty occasioned by the covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical shifts. The drilling down of the topic ranged from priorities including climate action, health, education, international trade, tourism, migration, technology, and food and nutritional security and disaster preparedness and management.

The Forum also highlighted economic challenges facing developing countries in the Caribbean, CARICOM's vision for a strengthened partnership with Canada, key drivers for cooperation and the economic recovery and the importance of fashioning a Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability Index in international financial institutions as part of a broader understanding of resilience and development for Small Island Developing States and Low-lying Coastal States of the region.

The following action items were proffered for shaping a new partnership for recovery and resilience:

- I. **Acknowledged the importance of renewing** the Canada-CARICOM partnership at the bilateral regional and multilateral level to address the recovery efforts considering the devastating impact of socio-economic covid-19 pandemic taking on board the vulnerabilities of the Caribbean.
 - **Stressed the need for both CARICOM and Canada to institute a permanent mechanism** for a Canada-Caribbean Dialogue.
 - **Underscored the need to cooperate more closely on the energy and food crisis** currently gripping the world to stave off additional hardship including tapping institutions such as IICA and CARDI. CARICOM's agri-food security agenda is also important in this regard.
 - **Forging a new partnership with Canada for cooperation in the areas of climate smart** technology, innovation in agriculture, knowledge and tech transfer, e-governance, e-commerce and fintech.
 - **Maintaining a development-oriented agenda** supported by policy-level interventions in areas such as trade, technology and resilient infrastructure including cooperation on innovative technology in the extractive industries.
 - **The importance of reviving the CARIBAN** trade mechanism to be vehicle to launch a new era of trade between Canada and CARICOM was highlighted.
 - **Access to development and climate finance was singled out for an area for multilateral policy** cooperation. It was noted that the IMF Executive Board approved a Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST) to help countries (including SIDS) build resilience to external shocks and ensure sustainable growth. Canada was the first to pledge 2.5 billion to the RST. It is hopeful that CARICOM countries would be able to fully capitalize on this.
 - **Canada's initiative, support and advocacy of the region's call for the adoption of a Multi-Vulnerability Index (MVI) to address the sensitivities surrounding access to financing** was also a necessary area for action. Work on related issues include the loss of correspondent banking in the region and debt management were highlighted as an avenue for a new partnership.
 - **The role of education in deepening the relationship was also underscored. The post pandemic world should see the new partnership embrace the new economy** which would inevitably equip the region in areas such as robotics, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, and clean technology.

- **The importance of using the geopolitical competition currently defining the international scene for Canada and CARICOM to redefine their partnership was underscored.**

Looking Ahead

CARICOM continues to value its relationship with Canada and recognizes Canada's critical work with the region. The region looks forward to having increased win-win engagements with and commitments from Canada. To this end, it is anticipated that an engagement with PM Trudeau and his CARICOM counterparts results in the launch and implementation of the CARICOM/Canada Roadmap in 2022.

Having highlighted the exigencies facing Small Island Developing States and Low-lying States in CARICOM, particularly with respect to the adverse effects of climate change and food insecurity, it was underscored that there is a need for a continued and sustained relationship between Canada and CARICOM, particularly as multilateralism continues to be under strain due to changing geopolitical landscape.

Canada's advocacy on behalf of the region as a developed-nation partner in configurations such as G7 and G20 is welcomed by the region. As small states, often, it is the region alliances with our developed-nation partners like Canada, that enhances our voice on the multilateral scene.

It is hopeful that at the level of the UN, there is the adoption of the MVI, having recognized that a new dispensation is needed for equity and the ability to access development and resilience financing. The inclusion of the IMF representative was precisely to advance this goal.

The objectives of the Policy Forum were therefore achieved. Priorities were fleshed out and recommendations received supportive opinions and endorsement from the highest levels of the IFIs and the Canadian government. There was consensus that such initiatives need to be convened in the future.

Appendix

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Canada, the Canada Caribbean Institute, and the Latin America and Caribbean Study Group of the Canadian International Council (CIC) National Capital Branch cordially invite you to the upcoming:

CARICOM-CANADA POLICY FORUM

CANADA-CARICOM: SHAPING A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

WEDNESDAY, 25 MAY 2022, 11 AM – 12:30 PM (EST)

WELCOME REMARKS

 **The Honourable Greg Fergus, P.C., MP,** Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board

MODERATORS

 **Sherry Tross,** High Commissioner of St. Kitts and Nevis to Canada, Dean, CARICOM Group Ottawa

 **Robert Ready,** Chair of the CIC National Capital Branch Latin America and Caribbean Study Group, and former Canadian High Commissioner to Jamaica and The Bahamas

GUEST SPEAKERS

 **Ambassador Donna Forde,** Assistant Secretary General, Foreign and Community Relations, CARICOM

 **Therese Turner Jones,** Former General Manager, Caribbean Department, IDB and now International Consultant

 **Philip Jennings,** Executive Director for Canada, Ireland, and the Caribbean at the International Monetary Fund

 **Professor Andy Knight,** Distinguished Professor, University of Alberta

CARICOM - CANADA POLICY FORUM



The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Canada, the Canada-Caribbean Institute, and the Latin America and Caribbean Study Group of the Canadian International Council (CIC) National Capital Branch cordially invite partner organizations, community members, and the general-public to participate in a virtual **CARICOM-Canada Policy Forum**, Wednesday, 25 May 2022 from 11 am to 12:30 pm.

As the region pursues a post-pandemic, “build back better” development strategy that prioritizes resilience, innovation, and sustainable growth, this panel of high-calibre experts will discuss the economic challenges of developing Caribbean economies, CARICOM’s vision for a strengthened partnership with Canada, key drivers for cooperation, and the economic recovery and resilience agenda in the context of international institutions.

[Click here to register for this free event »](#)

After your registration, you will receive an email confirming your Webinar access link. This event will be livestreamed.

Watch video of the discussion [here](#).