

DRAFT STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF CCCCC TO COP10

The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre or CCCCC (5Cs) is the focal point for Climate Change activities of 15 Caribbean countries. Recent history, in fact events that took place just a few months ago, have forcibly demonstrated that the Caribbean is one of the areas of the world most vulnerable to the negative impacts and effects of Climate Change. Hundreds of lives were lost in Haiti, Grenada and Jamaica. Billions of dollars of damage was caused by hurricanes of unprecedented intensity and formation patterns, floods and landslides. What is worse is that a state of uncertainty about the weather prevails, one that affects all aspects of our social and economic existence, and one with disastrous consequences for all of us, not just the Caribbean.

What makes this situation truly tragic is that we in the region, while perfectly willing to help ourselves and help one another, lack the resources needed to do so. Mitigation and adaptation require resources, human, material and technological, that we do not now possess. The role of the Centre is to ensure that we engage, extend and exploit those indigenous resources that we possess to their fullest. Under normal circumstances, and as we are doing now, we stand on our own feet as a first response. However, the circumstances surrounding climate change are unique. We contribute the least to the greenhouse gases and global warming which now threaten life and civilisation as we know it. Yet, we are being called upon to pay the highest price, both in the present and the future, in lives and livelihoods.

We fully support and stand by the Kyoto Protocol. In fact, the Centre is coordinating a regional effort to observe February 16, 2005, the day the Protocol comes into force, and from then on, annually. This will now be one of the most important dates in the history of global civilisation. While we, too, agree that the Protocol does not go far enough in its legislative power, and that we in the Caribbean are already experiencing the ravages of global warming and climate change, we are convinced of Kyoto's importance as a starting point, the first step in what is the dawn of a new global era.

We wish to single out as those who have responded to the call of the region for assistance and support. I want to highlight the role of three extremely important allies. First, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which has helped us to develop the Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) Project and with whom we are now working on a 3-country adaptation project. We also have to commend the Government of Italy for agreeing to underwrite the Centre for the next year and for considering further support for a total of five years, as well as to assist with a renewable energy project. Finally, we have to thank the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), especially its Mexico office, for the institutional support it has provided to us, including our participation in this Conference.

Mr. President, the CCCCC is an institution for the future, not just of the Caribbean, but of the world. We hope to be one of UNITAR's five Centres of Excellence located strategically throughout the world. We come from a region, and we represent a region, that has impacted positively on the history and culture of the world considerably beyond our small size and population.

Climate Change threatens our ability as Caribbean peoples to continue that positive and decisive contribution for which we are justly famous. Life as we know it, and as we have lived it, is immutably changed. The Centre has the mandate of mobilising and applying resources to facilitate and further the adaptation process. We take that mandate seriously. All we ask for is that our colleagues here and in the rest of the world take us as seriously as we take ourselves, and as gravely as we view the danger which we all face because of climate change.

Mr. President, while the day after tomorrow is important, the day before tomorrow, today, is even more important. In fact, it is vital. If we are to avoid the catastrophe predicted for the global future, we must make the best possible use of today. The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre wants the world to feel the same sense of urgency that impels and propels us. We are all in this together. As we are trying to do in the Caribbean, so must all of us in the world community, not only help ourselves but we must all help one another.

I thank you.