

**Keynote Address by**  
**The Honourable Stephenson King, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia at *the***  
***Fifth Biennial Caribbean Environmental Forum and Exhibition (CEF5)***  
***in conjunction with the***  
***Second Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum (CSEF2)***  
***and the***  
***15th Annual Wider Caribbean Waste Management Conference (ReCaribe)***  
**21<sup>st</sup> to 25th June 2010, Rose Hall Resort and Spa, Montego Bay, Jamaica**

A good and pleasant Caribbean morning to you all. I am honoured to join you for this, the **Fifth Biennial Caribbean Environmental Forum and Exhibition (CEF-5)**, the **Second Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum (CSEF2)** and the **15th Annual Wider Caribbean Waste Management Conference (ReCaribe)**. Let me commence by expressing my sincere thanks for the kind invitation to contribute, in some way, to this suite of important forums which has brought so many eminent individuals as well as key regional and international organizations, to this venue, here in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Permit me, also, to take this opportunity to thank our Jamaican hosts for the warmth and hospitality for which they are renowned.

It is good that we are all gathered here to discuss matters pertaining to the environment, to resource management, to health and ultimately, to sustainable development, which encompasses the economic, social, environmental and technological dimensions of our existence, and our quest for continued advancement. When I was asked to frame my remarks within the theme of the conference, that is: ***Coping with Copenhagen: Water, Waste, Energy, Health***, it immediately dawned on me that each aspect of the theme, that is; Water, Waste, Energy and Health, bears some connection with climate change as each will either be affected by, or have influence on, the phenomenon.

In reflecting further on the theme, my thoughts went back to the days, and nights, that I spent in the Danish capital in December 2009, at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in search of a meaningful and legally-binding outcome that would lay down the path to a future where the global community would collectively and effectively combat climate change. Numerous world leaders had converged on Copenhagen, the media coverage was unprecedented and expectations were high.

Of course, as we all know, the hoped-for consensus never emerged from what turned out to be, in the final analysis, a rather fractious, almost chaotic, affair. The most memorable output of the Copenhagen process was the so-called Copenhagen Accord that was brokered by a relatively small number of countries; that did not reflect some of the critical concerns of Small Island Developing States such as ours and that did not receive the *imprimatur* of the Conference of Parties that would have allowed it to become a legally-binding instrument.

Despite the anticipation, and the subsequent disappointment, many will say that, underneath it all, the Copenhagen outcome, or lack thereof should not have been a genuine surprise to anyone. After all, the road from Bali to Copenhagen had been one fraught with difficulty and, as we collectively approached COP-15, the delays became more protracted and the differences in negotiating positions, more apparent. Still, in the final analysis, COP-15 will be remembered as the first occasion in human history where so many were so sharply divided on how to save the planet from a phenomenon that we all agree is one of unprecedented magnitude, and of clear and present danger to us all.

Since December 2009, the international community has been forced to reflect soberly on the lessons of Copenhagen, and to try to put the pieces back together. This year, there have already been two UNFCCC negotiation sessions and another two are planned before COP-16. So, what has transpired to date, post-Copenhagen?

From the reports of the post-Copenhagen sessions, including those of the recently-concluded Bonn sessions, it is evident that there is still much bridge-building to be done if we are to arrive at meaningful consensus in Cancun, Mexico, later this year. There will also be many an obstacle to overcome on what is looking like an increasingly-bumpy road to Cancun. The negotiations have ground slowly, and not, apparently, always forward. The rhetoric has on some occasions been sharp and some parties have become more firmly entrenched in their positions.

The Alliance of Small Island States, AOSIS, ably and indefatigably led by Grenada, has continued to take a principled position and to carry the banner of the small island developing states, and by extension, of CARICOM. Despite the repeated frustrations, our AOSIS negotiators, including those from the Caribbean, have shown resolve, resourcefulness, respect for the negotiation process, and where necessary, restraint, and deserve our continued encouragement and support.

Against the backdrop of the unfolding post-Copenhagen negotiation process, one can ask what has been the CARICOM response to Copenhagen? As I stated earlier, the Copenhagen Accord, from the perspective of AOSIS, is far from perfect. For example, the Accord proposes limiting global greenhouse gas concentrations to a level that will result in an increase in atmospheric temperature of “below 2 degrees Celsius” in the first instance. This is not fully consistent with the call for AOSIS for emissions reductions leading to a temperature of well below 1.5 degrees.

Another flaw of the Accord is that it sets no real targets to achieve emissions reductions and leaves it up to developed countries to make commitments on emissions targets. In this regard, it is worth noting that the pledges made to date have fallen way short of what is needed, even for the 2 degree threshold.

Yet another shortcoming is that the Accord provides no actual guidance on the future of the Kyoto Protocol. AOSIS and many other developing countries wish to see the Kyoto Protocol extended in one way or another.

From an adaptation perspective, the Accord re-emphasizes and reaffirms the link between adaptation measures in response to the adverse effects of climate change and the potential impact of these response measures. AOSIS countries have fought hard to de-couple these two issues, especially as some other parties<sup>1</sup> have used this link to retard progress on adaptation.

The Copenhagen Accord also poses difficulties with its definitions of vulnerability. For example, it states that “adaptation... is a challenge faced by all countries”, but ignores the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” enshrined in the Convention. It goes on to prioritize adaptation funding for “the most vulnerable developing countries such as LDCs, SIDS and Africa”. This is new language not included in the Bali Action Plan and conveys the impression that these countries are but a few in a long list of “most vulnerable countries”.

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<sup>1</sup> Note for PM. Saudi Arabia and some other Gulf States, for example, have used this as a means of delaying progress on adaptation on the basis that response measures would result in them selling less oil, thereby harming their economies.

The Accord does not provide dedicated funding for adaptation. While it speaks of allocating funding between mitigation and adaptation on a “balanced” basis, it does not indicate how this balance will be determined.

In addition to the foregoing, and other, concerns raised about the text of the Copenhagen Accord, you will recall that I have alluded to issues relating to the very process by which the document was prepared. For these and other reasons, a number of countries have refused to associate themselves with it.

On the positive side, however, the Accord reflects the joint efforts of the USA, China, India, Brazil and South Africa, the latter four of which, as developing countries, actually agree to make voluntary commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. It also, among others, makes reference to assessing the scientific validity of reducing the temperature threshold to 1.5 degrees and to providing financial assistance to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation.

It is for such reasons that many developing countries see the Accord a basis for moving forward and have chosen to associate themselves with it, albeit many have done so with reservations. To date, at least six Caribbean have formally associated with the Accord and others have given some indication that they are also preparing to do so.

At a recent a CARICOM inter-sessional meeting in Roseau, Dominica, last March, Heads discussed the issue of Climate Change. The Copenhagen Accord was addressed in some detail and the meeting noted the observations of the CARICOM Task Force on Climate Change and Development that countries choosing to associate with the Accord should do so without prejudice to the UNFCCC Negotiations. On that score, I wish to indicate that I, in my capacity as head with responsibility for Sustainable Development, which includes Climate Change, have encouraged my CARICOM colleagues to act in accordance with the foregoing observation and to adopt a joint approach, to the extent possible.

At the Roseau meeting, it was noted that the Copenhagen funds had so far failed to materialize. The meeting encouraged the World Bank to ensure that countries would not have to go through a series of assessment studies in order to access the Copenhagen-related funds that it is seeking to leverage.

The meeting also agreed to support an extension of the CARICOM Task Force on Climate Change and Development to the end of December 2010 to facilitate the provision of technical support to Member States in the UNFCCC negotiations leading up to and at COP 16. Further, the meeting agreed that the CARICOM Secretariat and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) would facilitate a joint COHSOD/COTED Ministerial Level Meeting in June, 2010 and that this meeting would discuss and agree on project priorities at the national and regional levels and mechanisms for coordinating the Region's position at COP 16 in Mexico.

The aforementioned meeting was actually convened but had to be rescheduled to early September due to the unavailability of many invitees. This may actually be a blessing as the new date will allow for a better assessment of the state of negotiations following the session to be held in Bonn, in August.

At present, there are a number of adaptation and mitigation initiatives in the pipeline. Some of these are national in scope while others offer opportunities for regional collaboration in areas such as research and data management. Nevertheless, there is much to be done and it is hoped that post-Copenhagen, our development partners will make good on their pledges for new and additional funding, within a reasonable timeframe.

At this juncture, I hope that I have provided a reasonably good overview of political developments post-Copenhagen and will now turn my attention to some of the thematic areas to be covered in this forum, beginning with water. Water is cross-sectoral, in that it is vital to all economic sectors. Water also falls under my CARICOM Sustainable Development portfolio, so forgive me if I appear to give it preferential treatment.

### Water

And what of water? In the words of Leonardo da Vinci, "water is the driver of nature", and indeed, every life-form on the planet, including *Homo sapiens*, depends on it for survival. Yet, many countries around the world, and in our archipaelago, already face water challenges, whether in terms of supply or distribution, or both. In addition, we face problems associated with water quality, including contamination through human, agricultural and industrial and domestic effluent. According to Jacques Yves Cousteau, "Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans."

With these pre-existing circumstances, climate change impacts will superimpose additional pressures upon our already stressed water supplies.

Our scientists at the University of the West Indies, using regional climate models, have come up with some worrisome projections for the region, with regard to precipitation. They project an overall downward trend for rainfall into the 2050s and beyond. In the case for Saint Lucia, for example, they speak of a decrease of between 26 and 50 percent in overall precipitation by 2050. In addition, the scientists project changes in the temporal and spatial distribution of rainfall. When one factors in the impact of sea level rise and the resulting saline intrusion on coastal aquifers, the scenario is none-to encouraging for the Caribbean. In simplest terms, it means greater demand from a growing population, and from hopefully still-growing economies, for a diminishing resource. This is a grave scenario and I need not remind you that in many a conflict around the world, water has been, or currently is, a key underlying factor. According to a 2007 report by International Alert, entitled *A Climate of Conflict*, “the conflict risk if water resources are inadequate lies in poor management that either wastes water by inappropriate use of it and inadequate conservation measures, or politicises the issue and seeks a scapegoat on which to blame shortages.” The report goes on to state that tensions over water rights and supply also can be worsened by development programmes that privatise control of the resource without looking after the rights of the poor.

Many of us, either as policy-makers or as consumers, have experienced the frustration associated with chronic water shortages and rationing. The drought that affected many of our countries this year made existing water problems more acute and had many governments and water utilities considering measures that they would not normally have, including importation from countries less severely impacted. It does not, therefore, require much of a stretch of the imagination to visualize the impact of more frequent and increasingly severe droughts, occasioned by climate change, on our societies; that is, without the appropriate interventions. From recent experience, and by this I refer to the 2010 drought, I can tell you that trying to work with people who are suffering from frequent and protracted interruptions in their water supply potable water, is a real challenge for policy-makers.

Having had a foretaste of the future, we need to begin to plan and act with urgency. From assessing our water resources to developing and implementing action plans, we must look at

options that are appropriate to our circumstances and that will build the resilience of our water infrastructure to withstand the vagaries of climate change. We also need to ensure that we adopt an approach that meaningfully involves households and the private sector, as well as the water utilities. In this light, I wish to make reference to the work done by under the IWCAM Project on rainwater harvesting at the household level and to that done under the SPACC project, in Saint Lucia, through public-private sector partnership.

There are also opportunities to introduce regulatory and fiscal measures to encourage appropriate behaviours. For example, water conservation measures can be incorporated into building guidelines and tax or duty incentives can be instituted for water-saving devices. Further, there are opportunities to create synergy between our climate change and other environmental efforts, for example, using our work on water quality management to leverage funding to protect our existing water resources.

### Waste

On the matter of waste, it has been said that the landfills of today will be the mines of tomorrow. However, from a climate change perspective, landfills generate methane which is 21 times as potent as carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. Where possible, we should seek to tap this methane, or the raw waste to produce energy. Sewerage systems also generate greenhouse gases and there are also approaches to managing such waste. We do have to be careful, however, not to be lured into the use of technologies that are untested.

On a wider scale, the improper management of waste leads to degradation of our ecosystems. This in turn renders them more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Conversely, cleaning up our act will make our natural systems more resilient to the climate change phenomenon.

### Energy

As we are all aware, the burning of fossil fuels is one of the greatest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Being able to manage our use of fossil fuels through, for example, the increased use of renewable energy technologies or energy efficiency is seen, at the global level, as the way forward. In addition to its petroleum reserves, the Caribbean holds potential for the development of hydroelectric, geothermal, solar and wind power, among others. While, in general, progress has been slow, it is pleasing to see that efforts are being made to put in place the enabling

policy and regulatory frameworks. It is also heartening to see that at varying scales, renewable energy installations are gradually springing up across the region.

On that note, I wish to publicly acknowledge the support that GTZ/CREDP has provided to Saint Lucia in developing a National Energy Policy which is currently before the Cabinet of Ministers, and for the assistance in promoting renewable in my country. In similar vein, I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the OAS over the years on matters relating to sustainable energy planning, policy development and geothermal development.

### Health

In the area of human health, climate change is expected to, among others, lead to increase in the occurrence of vector-borne diseases, and those associated with extreme heat events. Much will rely, therefore, on the ability of our health systems to track and even predict outbreaks and to meet the increased demand for health services in a warming world. In addition, our hospitals and other health infrastructure will have to be designed, or reinforced, to withstand the onslaught of the increasingly intense hurricanes projected for the region. In this regard, I am again pleased to make reference to the SPACC Project, which, in Saint Lucia, is generating useful outputs for incorporating wind speed considerations into building design and, in addition, testing these in the retrofitting of an existing public building.

For all the sectors I have discussed, there are emerging lessons and successes. However, there are also many needs and these continue to increase alongside our growing understanding of climate changes and its anticipated impacts. Fulfilling those needs, and the needs for other sectors, will require financial, technical and other resources that far outstrip our current capacities.

National governments, even through their best efforts, will be unable to go it alone. In addition, in many instances, there is synergy by adopting a collaborative approach, and so, at the regional level, we have established a number of agencies, including the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (5Cs). We have entrusted these agencies to work with, and on behalf of, the member states, both jointly and individually. I am therefore pleased to be able to say that these two organizations have done some really good work and that we expect them to generate even more successes in the future. However, while we recognize that the funding that Governments

provide is usually far from adequate and that these agencies need to go out and access financial resources from extra-regional sources, it is essential that they ensure at all times that they keep sight of the need to ensure that the projects they execute are fully in sync with the needs of the region and that their efforts reflect regional and national priorities. Having said so, our governments have a responsibility to ensure that they provide sufficient guidance to our regional institutions in order to minimize overlap, duplication and conflict.

The same must be said of our international partners, both bilateral and multilateral. Yes, we do require financial and technical assistance, lots of it, and in the case of climate change, there is clearly a moral and legal responsibility by Annex 1 countries to provide such assistance. Yet, too often, we are offered support for the “software” and not the “hardware” and at levels of financing that fall way short of the mark. The assessments are often necessary and of great value, but plenty of fuel (environmentally-friendly, of course) and no vehicle, will take us nowhere. In other words, after we have prepared excellent regional and national assessments, policies and plans, these often sit unimplemented for years, due to the lack of financial resources.

We have called for new, additional funding. This funding must be adequate and must be made available without undue conditionalities. In other words, we need to see the Copenhagen funding and it must be accessible to our countries.

To end, I remind you that while we are here to discuss and exchange views, the region relies upon minds and institutions such as yours to propose solutions to the challenges to that face us. It is my hope therefore that there will be many concrete recommendations emerging from these discussions that can be applied in the short-to-medium term.

I thank you for attention and wish you successful deliberations.