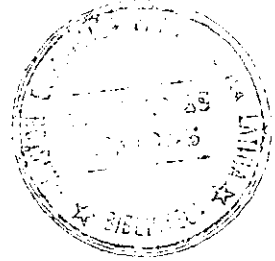


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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA  
Subregional Office for the Caribbean  
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Seventh Session  
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago  
19-25 January 1983



ADDRESS BY  
HON. UNISON WHITEMAN  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, GRENADA  
AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF  
THE CDCC SEVENTH SESSION  
- MONDAY 24 JANUARY 1983 -

STATEMENT BY THE HON. UNISON WHITEMAN  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, GRENADA

Executive Secretary of ECLA, Dr. Enrique Iglesias, Director of the ECLA Office at Port-of-Spain, Dr. John Spence, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Basil Ince, His Excellency Don Martina, other Ministers of Government, Distinguished Delegates, Observers to this Seventh Meeting of the CDCC.

It is for us a distinct pleasure to be here in Port-of-Spain for this Seventh Meeting of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee and to hand over the chairmanship of this important meeting to our sister Caribbean territory of Trinidad and Tobago. Warmed by the hospitality of the people of our sister island, we look forward to meaningful discussions and to a year during which the CDCC will be more active, more vibrant and will work energetically to the benefit of the peoples of our region.

In 1982, the beginning of the Sixth Session, we spoke with conviction of the fact that the CDCC could play a very useful role in the development of the region. The difficulties with which the Organization has been faced in its efforts to attain funding for development projects have meant limited benefits for the region. Nevertheless, with the economies of all our countries feeling the painful effects of world recession, we cannot afford to be complacent about the CDCC and to merely speak of the useful role it can play in our development.

We the members of the Committee, have to ensure that it fulfils this role. In 1982, we spoke of bringing the people of the region into the work of the Committee. During 1983, we have to ensure that this work is done and that the programmes and projects move from being promising phrases on paper to bringing real benefits to our peoples. During the past year, budgetary and other constraints have severely hampered the effective implementation of CDCC programmes. This is of tremendous concern to our developing subregion, since the programmes identified by our Governments represent for us matters of importance to our integrated development. Another matter which concerns us is the insufficient power of our Secretariat in Port-of-Spain. A Secretariat without adequate authority makes a mockery of our sincere attempts at co-operation and development.

Delegates, it must be remembered that we have within our grouping, countries from throughout the Caribbean region, Dutch, Spanish, French and English-speaking. Ours is a grouping undeniably representative of the wider Caribbean. We are comprised of developing countries with limited resources, but willing to co-operate where possible to provide support services to our sister Caribbean countries. As member countries of the United Nations, we are confident that the Economic Commission for Latin America, of which our Committee is a sub-grouping, will give due attention to the expressed needs of Caribbean governments.

In reality, the problems of our region have not decreased during the last year. There have been continued threats to the peace, security and development of the Caribbean. All our countries have faced severe economic pressures; the economies of some of our countries have faced added pressure because of bigotry and non-acceptance of the concept of ideological pluralism; others have been affected by border controversies. For all of us, economic development is important and can be effectively achieved only in an atmosphere of peace and from a position of independence. It is in the interest of the integrated development of our region that the People's Revolutionary Government repeats the call for our region to be declared a zone of peace, independence and development..

Our shared historical process has left us with problems which demand creative solutions. However, in this struggle to find the solutions to problems of chronic poverty and under-development, we must always show tolerance and respect for each other's internal processes. As Mexican President Miguel de La Madrid has correctly stated (and I quote) "No one can dictate from the outside what a given people really want, or how they should go about obtaining it". Mexico, he said, sees its foreign relations in terms of four fundamental principles: non-intervention; self-determination; the sovereign equality of states; and the peaceful solution of controversies. We share the view of the Mexican President that we must be respectful of other peoples, decisions, needs and desires.

Distinguished colleagues, it is an unfortunate fact that the Committee seemed to get a new lease on life only when efforts were made through the Caribbean Basin Initiative to bring divisiveness to the Caribbean family by promising a little assistance to some, a little more to others and none to those who were hypocritically deemed undeserving. But the CDCC should not be a forum where we get together only to see how best we can outdo sister territories, and qualify for the crumbs thrown out by demanding and condescending patrons. Within this Committee, our task is to make the work plan meaningful and ensure that the funds are found to ensure progress for our people.

Distinguished colleagues, this Seventh Session of the CDCC is taking place against a background of a continued recession in the world capitalist economies, which shows no sign of relief in the immediate future. Given the fact that world recession tends to have a particularly negative effect on open, dependent economies like ours, prospects for narrowing the gap between the developed and underdeveloped economies become even more remote.

This widening of the gap between the former colonial powers on the one hand, and their ex-colonies on the other, is as much a reality today as it has always been over the years. Careful research clearly demonstrates this fact. In 1770, the per capita income of the colonial powers was US \$210, while that of the colonised, and soon to be colonised world was US \$170. By 1870, the figure for the colonial powers had risen to \$560 while that of the colonised countries actually fell to \$160.

By 1970, former colonialists enjoyed a per capita income of \$2,500 while the ex-colonies earned a mere \$340. In short, the per capita income ratio declined from 1 1/4: 1 in 1770, to 7:1 in 1970. What an injustice!

What these figures indicate, distinguished colleagues, is that international economic relations based on the colonial model of co-operation, has not provided the answer to the problems of development of third world economies. Delegates, I reiterate my government's call for a New International Economic Order, based on the principle of equality and mutual benefit.

Our 1982-1983 work programme contained constructive proposals on which we are yet to advance. During this meeting, the Committee must address itself to one important question - funding. As a sub-committee of CEPAL, the CDCC can be made more active if member governments insist that training programmes advance, that concrete proposals are put forward and implemented, that projects like those related to the removal of language barriers, the integration of women in development, tourism, leave the perpetual environment of the drawing board, and begin to make a positive impact on the development process in our region. Our countries are too poor, our peoples too much in need of social amenities, to allow us to indulge in yearly meetings which are mere talk shops, and are not aimed concretely at the integrated development of the region.

We are convinced that 1983 will mean for CDCC a year of increased activity, a year of increased co-operation to the benefit of the countries of our sub-region.

The Committee will undoubtedly benefit from the chairmanship of the host country of the CDCC Secretariat, Trinidad and Tobago. Trinidad and Tobago brings to this Office valuable experience, a keen knowledge of the workings of the United Nations system and undoubted interest in ensuring co-operation among the countries of the Wider Caribbean. Indeed, CDCC exists largely because of the commitment to regional integration of the late esteemed Caribbean statesman and Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Williams. It was his insight and concern for Caribbean development that brought our countries together to discuss and find solutions to common development problems within the framework of the CDCC.

As a member of the Bureau for the coming year, Grenada looks forward to providing to the current Chairman, full co-operation to ensure effective implementation of the programme of the Committee. The level of participation at this meeting is a source of great inspiration and encouragement. We are confident that CDCC will rise to the challenge of the eighties.

Grenada is pleased to extend warm congratulations to Trinidad and Tobago on the assumption of the Chairmanship of the CDCC.