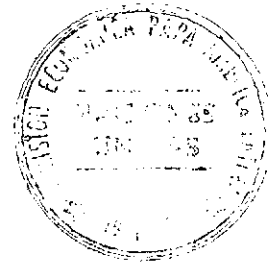


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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA  
Subregional Office for the Caribbean  
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION COMMITTEE

Seventh Session  
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ADDRESS BY  
HON. D. F. MARTINA  
PRIME MINISTER AND  
MINISTER OF GENERAL AFFAIRS  
OF THE NETHERLANDS ANTILLES  
AT THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY OF THE  
CDCC SEVENTH SESSION  
- MONDAY 24 JANUARY 1983 -

STATEMENT MADE BY THE HON. D.F. MARTINA,  
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF GENERAL AFFAIRS OF THE  
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

Mr. Chairman,

It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to address this distinguished assembly at the opening of the Seventh Session of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee.

This Session is indeed an historic event, since it is the first time that the Committee is meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, the site where the Sixteenth Plenary of ECLA passed the resolution for the establishment of the CDCC in 1975.

Also historic because the CDCC as a concept was born out of the vision of a son of this soil, the late Dr. Eric Williams, the then Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

He led the call for the establishment of this indigenous organ for co-operation in our region. It was the founding-father of CDCC who, from his standpoint of a world famous historian, described the Caribbean area in socio-cultural terms emphasizing the great common experiences which make our Caribbean people an identifiable unit.

Mr. Chairman, although the Caribbean has a distinctive cultural and historic identity, it is also a fact that a close look at our region reveals a high degree of fragmentation and balkanisation. These characteristics coupled with the worsening world economic and political situation strengthen the need to safeguard the viability of the existing mechanisms for intra-Caribbean co-operation.

The current momentum in the movement toward regional co-operation and integration should be maintained and will be obviously heightened by a common and specific approach to concrete priority problems. It goes without saying that the definition of these problems should be based upon their relevance, urgency and desirability for all member countries. I believe that the institutional approach through the CDCC provides a solid basis for the achievement of these objectives.

Let it be clearly understood: by promoting common understanding and actions to unite the Caribbean peoples it is our goal to make contribution to the completion of the "ultimate profile of the American man".

Our contribution to Latin America will be to assist her in creating "nuestra América", our America.

Not Latin, not Saxon, just simply our America.

Mr Chairman, I am convinced that a strengthened CDCC Secretariat will be for the benefit of all of us. Intra-regional co-operation is an important and necessary supplement to our national development efforts.

Furthermore, it will contribute to the creation of a new order of relations among the Caribbean countries and between them and the outside world.

The Work Programme which has been considered over the last few days clearly has important thrusts in this regard. It reflects a careful and balanced outline of our specific needs and areas for possible co-operation.

For example, the Removal of Language Barriers is a critical activity in which the Netherlands Antilles have a particular interest; but this is only one of the many areas in which we expect progress in the near future. The officials in my delegation have told me of the keen interest shown by all delegates at the technical level in the discussions on the various issues before the Committee.

I have also been briefed on the recommendations aimed at securing the necessary facilities for the implementation of the decisions and resolutions of the Committee. Here and now is the place and time to renew our commitments; the result of all our efforts will depend upon a real political impetus. The CDCC Secretariat must be strengthened and endowed with the necessary resources to effectively carry out our mandates.

In the meantime, the skilled Director of the ECLA Subregional Office for the Caribbean, Dr. John Spence, is guiding his conscientious staff to achieve the utmost within given constraints.

Credit is due and we can assure the CDCC Secretariat of our profound feelings of appreciation.

I want to urge the Secretariat of ECLA to undertake all necessary efforts to mobilize additional resources which will be required for the biennium 1984-1985, in order to ensure the implementation of the Work Programme as will be decided upon.

We have the highest faith in our dynamic Executive Secretary, Dr. Enrique Iglesias, who has consistently shown a true dedication and a warm heart for the Caribbean.

May I close, Mr. Chairman, by saying that I am especially happy to be back again in this country of my alma mater, the University of the West Indies.

Let me give a special word of thanks, through you, Minister Ince, to the Government and the people of Trinidad and Tobago for the warm welcome and the traditional hospitality given to all delegations attending this Seventh Session of CDCC.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.