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**SUMMARY REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUENT DECLARATION
AND FUNCTIONS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE
CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE (CDCC)**

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Introduction

At the ninth Meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the CDCC which convened at the ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean on 10-11 May 1999, the opportunity was taken by the secretariat to sensitize delegations to its perception of a need to “reinvent” the CDCC so as to enable it to meet the challenges presented by the new and still evolving regional and wider international environment. That initiative represented a preliminary input into a theme that had already been identified as being relevant and appropriate for discussion at the ministerial level, particularly in the context of the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Committee. A major outcome of the preliminary exchange that took place at that Meeting was the reiteration of an earlier proposal that the Constituent Declaration of the Committee be “reshaped”.

In this context, as indicated in the Preface to the revised version of the informal “Discussion Paper” entitled “The CDCC into the new millennium: Meeting the challenges of the future”, which is also before the eighteenth Session of the Committee, it was recognized by the secretariat that several elements contained in the Constituent Declaration no longer found resonance in the prevailing ethos of the contemporary international environment, characterized by globalization and the entrenchment of market forces within a rules-based system, among its more salient characteristics. In addition, the need was recognized for the incorporation of the new and specific issues facing the region into the new millennium, as well as the activities that might be pursued to enhance the effectiveness, visibility and relevance of the Committee in the promotion of the needs and interests of its entire membership.

Notwithstanding the rationale conveyed in the Preface to the Discussion Paper in support of a gradualistic and pragmatic approach to the reshaping of the Committee’s Constituent Declaration, this Paper seeks to identify the basic range of issues that might need to be addressed in reshaping this basic document.

The preambular section of the Constituent Declaration

The point has been made in the Discussion Paper that the CDCC bears all the marks of the period in which it was conceived and established. This was a period of “Third World radicalism” in the international scene: the era of, inter alia, the Sixth and Seventh Special Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), of the call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) by the developing countries, of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, of vigorous action by Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), of the launching and commencement of

UNCLOS 111, of the Integrated Programme for Commodities within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and similar endeavours, spearheaded in the main, by the developing countries. All of these developments took place against the background of the polarised environment that was the Cold War with the Non-Aligned Movement also occupying a significant space. This summary analysis of the international environment provides the general basis for the identification of those elements in the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC that might need to be “reshaped” in the context of the contemporary dispensation. Many of the elements not highlighted here are also candidates for more specific drafting but in this submission emphasis will be placed on those elements that will portray the essence of the CDCC, its identity, value system and, with that, its work programme..

General

In the Preambular paragraph, the Committee is to be set in the context of globalization and market liberalization and of the situation of small States in that regard. Similarly, concepts such as “sustainable development” and “Small Island Developing States” with references to the United Nations Global Conference on Small Island Developing States (UNGCSIDS) and the other global conferences of the 1990s also need to be incorporated in entrenched positions.

Specific observations

1. **Certain nuances also appear to be in need of adjustment.** An example of this is the expression in the **second** preambular paragraph, which addresses possible moves by the region to “increase its bargaining power as regards third countries and groupings of countries.”
2. In the post-United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and UNGCSIDS era, issues such as that pertaining to “the sea and all its resources” as set out in the **fourth** preambular paragraph, could benefit from a more comprehensive approach to the management of hydrospace taking into account, in addition, initiatives taken by the region of the UNGA towards having the Caribbean Sea internationally recognised as “a Special Area in the context of sustainable development”.
3. In the depiction of the Committee’s operational environment, the scenario is to be amplified to incorporate new institutions such as the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and, also, to update the scope for collaboration both in general, as well as in specific terms as regards the Committee’s relations with other regional bodies.
4. The reference, in the **eighth** preambular paragraph of the Constituent Declaration to the need to pay special attention to “the relatively less developed and in most

- cases very small countries of the subregion” might be reviewed, taking into account the shifting fortunes of countries formerly assigned to the respective categories of “more developed” and “least developed”.
5. Following from the globalization/market liberalisation ethos, attention might be directed to the **ninth** preambular paragraph which makes reference to, inter alia, the suggestion that Caribbean countries “maintain solidarity with the adoption of measures for obtaining equitable and remunerative prices, including solidarity with measures taken by producers associations of developing countries in that regard;”. Likewise, the precise drafting of the **eleventh** preambular paragraph might be revisited in light of its reference to “the inalienable right to exercise permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and economic activities, including nationalization, and that the countries of the Caribbean are united as one in mutual support and solidarity against any form of economic action, pressure or coercion that might be used against any one of them for having exercised its legitimate rights;” In the **twelfth** preambular paragraph, reference is made to “the activities of transnational corporations, in those countries that accept their operations.....” This text might also be revisited to more closely reflect the values prevailing in the international system while, at the same time, articulating the concerns of the small countries of the region.

The operative paragraphs

The single most important observation as regards the operative paragraphs of the Constituent Declaration is to the effect that this section might be strengthened by the clear identification of the issues of priority interests to the region, in the context of its sustainable development, embracing, in particular, the social, economic and environmental dimensions.

Operative paragraph 9, with its reference to “the question of a common Caribbean position on the Law of the Sea aimed specifically at securing international recognition for a special regime for the Caribbean multi-State archipelago within the framework of the new International Convention on the Law of the Sea” has been overtaken by events. This formulation should be replaced by the new issues of relevance to the region in this and related spheres.

Final note

This summary review of the Constituent Declaration of the CDCC, undertaken at the request of member Countries and which is of a preliminary nature, has sought to provide a general guide to the basic orientations that might be adopted by the Committee if it is to support its membership in meeting the complex challenges of the contemporary era. It also seeks to guide the identification of the issues of priority interest to the membership. In this latter regard, emphasis is placed on the need to operationalise the

concept of “sustainable development” in its social, economic and environmental dimensions. The germ of the environmental/cultural dimension is contained in Operative Paragraph 18 which makes reference to the need to carry out “projects aimed at better use and protection of the environment, including the preservation of the flora and fauna of the countries of the Caribbean, as well as their historical monuments and documents.”

Related to the foregoing is a project currently envisaged by the secretariat for preparation of a document that seeks to identify, for the consideration of member countries, in more specific detail, the types of issues that might engage the Committee in the future and which might constitute its work programmes in the future. It is also recognised that subsequent phases of the “reshaping” of the Constituent Declaration will require, as a critical input, the ideas, values and preferences of the member countries. With respect to the “Functions and Rules of Procedure of the Caribbean Development and Co-operation Committee”, it is submitted that any amendments to this fundamental text should originate from the membership.