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the HummingBird

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REQUIRES A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH

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ABOUT US

Issued on a monthly basis, The Hummingbird offers insights into the latest projects, publications, technical assistance missions and research carried out by ECLAC Caribbean. In addition to these, sneak previews are provided of the most salient upcoming events, alongside enriching follow-ups to previously covered issues. With a view to featuring a variety of facets of Caribbean life and lifestyle, The Hummingbird also zooms in on cultural activities and landmark occurrences through an eye-opening regional round-up.

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Please see our contact details on the back cover of this magazine.

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

7 April
World Health Day

21 April
World Creativity and Innovation Day

22 April
International Girls in ICT Day

23 April
World Book and Copyright Day

UPCOMING MEETINGS

26 - 27 MARCH 2025
Caribbean Youth Dialogues 2025 in preparation of the ECOSOC Youth Forum

10 APRIL 2025
XXVII Meeting with Specialized Agencies for the Advancement of Women (OEM27)

16 APRIL 2025
Caribbean Regional Breakout Session at the ECOSOC Youth Forum

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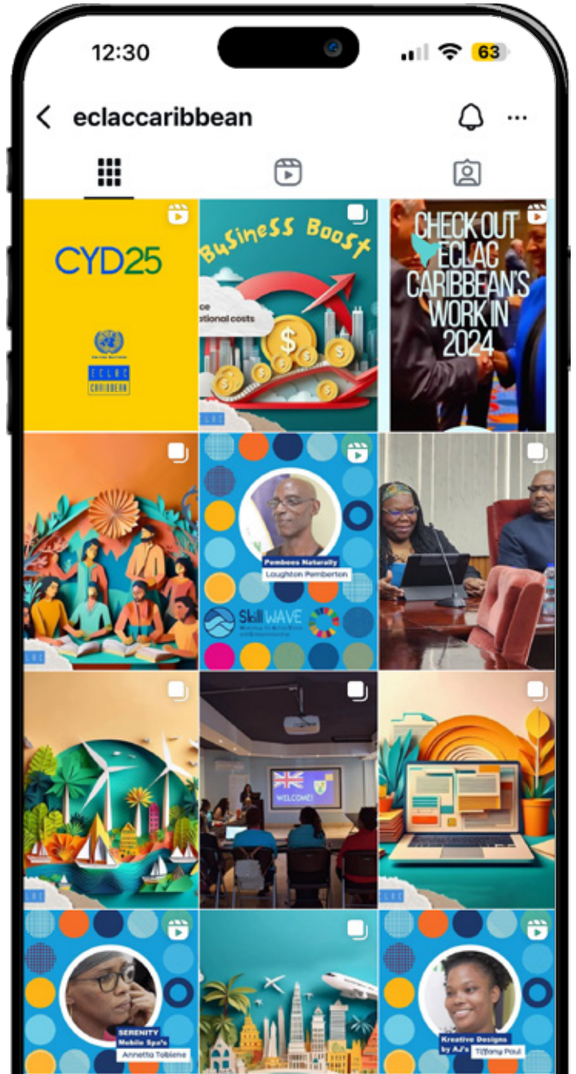


GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CARIBBEAN REQUIRES A TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH

SAYS FORMER UN WOMEN CARIBBEAN HEAD

CAROL GASKIN & AKEEL LOVELL

This story was first published by UN Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

The former head was leading the inaugural session of UN Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean's "Community of Practice" series for staff.

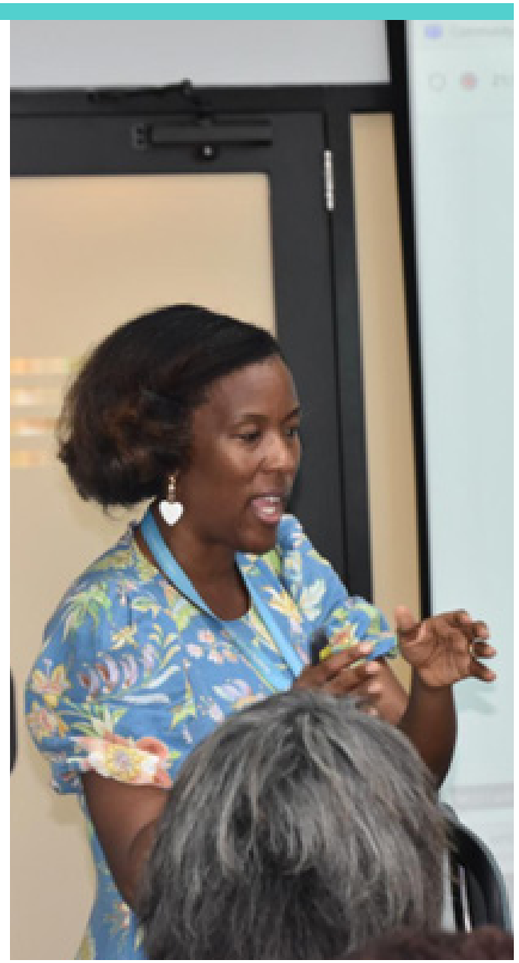
Achieving true gender equality in the Caribbean requires more than just responsive actions—it demands a transformative shift in how institutions and governments address the barriers that perpetuate inequality.

This was the key message from Tonni Brodber, former Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office (MCO) – Caribbean, as she addressed over 40 UN staff members during an inaugural staff Community of Practice session at UN House themed: **From Resolution to Action: Gender Equality as a Catalyst for Sustainable Development.**

The hybrid initiative, which saw participation from UN staff across the Eastern Caribbean, seeks to bridge gaps across UN Agencies, Funds, and Programmes, providing staff with greater insight into Agency-specific priorities and updates on emerging global issues that may be outside of their mandates. Moreover, it aims to strengthen internal communications and build synergies to enhance joint approaches to UN work in the region.

Leading the participatory session, which included staff surveys and a high-level of engagement, Ms. Brodber said the Caribbean requires gender-transformative actions that tackle the deep-rooted barriers to equality.

"Gender responsiveness means acting on the issue, but gender-transformative actions are what we need, especially with states. We must address the barriers that states may not even realize are keeping certain groups out," she underlined. Using an example from the COVID-19 pandemic, when some regional leaders allowed workers to return to work while keeping schools closed, Ms. Brodber noted that this posed a major challenge, particularly for caregivers, who were predominantly women.



"When leaders across the region said you can go back to work after COVID-19 but schools were closed… people said you know, we are depending on you, the older women in society, [to help take care of the children] but some of them were also working."

For Ms. Brodber, being gender-transformative means creating systems that allow both women and men to participate equally in the workforce, such as opening schools, adjusting work hours, and recognising the structural burdens on caregivers.

She emphasized that gender equality also entailed ensuring that the needs of men were also taken into consideration.

UNPAID CARE WORK

The session also brought to the fore the issue of unpaid care work, which was the focus of a recent UN Women-led study on the topic 'Assessing the Impact of Unpaid Care Work on Families in Barbados'. Ms. Brodber told the forum:

"We still have serious gaps as it pertains to women's empowerment, and you won't have gender equality without us addressing these gaps right now, like unpaid care work."

She noted that unpaid care work disproportionately affects women, who are often expected to organize after-school activities, cook, and manage household tasks. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Women, unpaid work refers to tasks such as caregiving, household chores, and community service that are performed without financial compensation.

Ms. Brodber also highlighted the challenges women face in business and entrepreneurship. "In the Caribbean, women own only 8% of registered businesses, most of which are sole proprietorships. If these women fall ill or need to care for a child, their businesses suffer," she explained, emphasizing the structural barriers to entrepreneurial success.

Turning to systemic disadvantages, Brodber remarked, "Historically, our institutions have privileged men." She cited an example from the 1980s, when women in many Caribbean countries were required to have male family members co-sign loans or open bank accounts—an issue more rooted in gender than ability.

BEIJING +30: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

The discussion also focused on the broader global movement for gender equality, particularly the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. Ms. Brodber underscored the significance of the 1995 Beijing Conference, where world leaders committed to addressing gender inequality in areas such as education, health, violence, and economic participation.

Despite some progress, many of the issues outlined in the Beijing Platform remain unresolved. "We're still talking about women's representation in leadership, pay gaps, and unpaid care work," Ms, Brodber observed making the point that the Beijing Platform is a reminder that gender equality isn't a one-time effort but requires sustained commitment.

The forum, which was organized by the UN Communications Group, is expected to be a bi-monthly initiative , to be led by various UN AFPs. Some of the Agencies represented at the inaugural session included the UN Resident Coordinator Office, UN Women, UNDP, PAHO, UNICEF, FAO, WFP, ILO, and the UN Information Centre (UNIC).

A Humming Bird FEATURE

ECLAC AND ILO CALL ON COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

TO ADOPT REGULATIONS TO INCREASE TIME FOR CARE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

In the month of March, the two United Nations organizations launched a bulletin titled Time for care in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards social and gender co-responsibility.

In a new joint bulletin published leading up to International Women's Day, celebrated annually on March 8, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) stated that leave periods, regulations and instruments that extend the time allowed for care are fundamental for fostering social and gender co-responsibility in the work environment.

These regulations guarantee the rights of persons who need care and those who provide it, help galvanize the economy and allow for progress towards equality and the care society, the organizations emphasized.

READ MORE

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ECLAC AND ILO CALL ON COUNTRIES IN THE REGION TO ADOPT REGULATIONS TO INCREASE TIME FOR CARE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean was established following a 2007 request by ECLAC member states to monitor progress toward gender equality. Coordinated by ECLAC's Division for Gender Affairs, the Observatory tracks compliance with international gender goals, produces strategic indicators for policymakers, and issues regular reports on disparities between men and women in areas such as work, political representation, gender violence, and reproductive rights. Its ultimate aim is to promote equality in power, decision-making, and social participation, as outlined in the Quito Consensus.

Gender Equality Bulletin No. 4 – Time for care in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards social and gender co-responsibility analyzes the status of maternity, paternity and parental leave in the region and proposes a series of recommendations for improvements regarding long-term and emergency leave, as well a shortened working day and more flexible arrangements for hours and places of work as regulatory tools that should be made available to both men and women.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, only 5 countries provide 18 weeks or more of

maternity leave; 10 countries have between 14 and 17 weeks, according to the ILO standard, and 18 countries provide fewer than 14 weeks of paid maternity leave. Despite recent improvements, protection of this right is still limited, mainly due to low labor participation of women and high rates of labor informality, affirm ECLAC and the ILO. In the region, only 50% of women participate in the labor market, compared to 75% of men. In addition, 52% of employed women do not contribute or are not affiliated to any social security system, which in most countries is a requirement for accessing this right.

Only 11 countries in Latin America provide paid paternity leave of less than 10 days, and just 6 grant leave of between 10 and 15 days. Of 14 Caribbean countries, only Suriname recognizes paid **paternity leave**, of 8 days. "Major challenges remain in terms of the duration of this type of leave, how it is funded, its coverage, and job protection in the context of care responsibilities. This makes it impossible to overcome the structural challenge of inequality related to the sexual division of labor in order to achieve gender equality," the Bulletin states.

Parental leave, which may be paid or unpaid, consists of a longer period of job-protected leave made available to one or both parents to enable them to care for their child after maternity or paternity leave. In the region, only Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Uruguay recognize the right to paid parental leave. Cuba was the first to approve this type of leave, which currently spans the child's first 15 months of life.

According to the ECLAC and ILO publication, only 5 countries in Latin America (Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador and Mexico) provide for l**ong-term care leave.** Only in Costa Rica can this leave be used for another family member who is not a child. Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico offer social security-funded paid leave for employees, and only Chile extends this to the self-employed. In Ecuador, the cost of leave is borne by the employer. In Cuba, however, long-term care leave is unpaid.

Finally, **leave for urgent reasons**—for short-duration family-related reasons—is more common in the region than long-term care leave. Currently, 14 countries make provisions for this type of leave (Argentina, the Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay).

The Caribbean has the lowest coverage in this regard. In all countries, except for the Bahamas, emergency leave is unpaid. Only in Chile is it financed through social security; in the other countries, it is financed by the employer sector.

> **It is time to speed up progress towards substantive equality and promote the society of care as a goal in our shared path.**

stated José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ECLAC's Executive Secretary. "The future is here, and the demand for care work is increased by population aging, epidemiological changes and the effects of climate change. In this context, gradual changes are not enough; we need bold policy that redefines the path forward," he emphasized during a dialogue with representatives from government, labor organizations and companies during which the Bulletin was presented.

In a similar vein, Ana Virginia Moreira, Regional Director of the ILO for Latin America and the Caribbean, stressed that "care work sustains life and economies. It is time to recognize its value and guarantee decent conditions for those who provide care, progressing towards a system of accessible, equal and sustainable care."

According to calculations made by the **Care Policy Investment Simulator** (developed by the ILO and updated for Latin America and the Caribbean with the participation of ECLAC), "without considering induced effects or indirect employment, **investment in care** in the region could create approximately 32 million jobs by 2035, of which 11 million would be generated in universal early childcare services, and 21 million in long-term care. In addition to these benefits, the projected change in the female employment rate would have a significant effect on reducing gender gaps in employment," the two organizations state in the Bulletin.

IN SUMMARY, ECLAC AND ILO RECOMMEND:

- **Promoting** ratification and implementation of international labor standards on care, including the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), in accordance with the Resolution concerning decent work and the care economy of the 112th International Labour Conference.
- **Progressively** adopt all measures needed to ensure that States, as rights guarantors, speed up effective implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda, in particular the Buenos Aires Commitment, adopted by ECLAC member States at the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in 2022.
- **Align** the countries' maternity leave regulations with the international standards laid out in Convention No. 183 and guarantee this effective right for all women working in the formal or informal sectors in a progressive, universal and supportive manner.
- **Recognize** and expand the right to paid, non-transferrable paternal leave paid for by social security
- **Promote** implementation in the region of regulatory frameworks that establish unalienable non-transferable paternal leave that is unbiased and guarantees that all fathers and mothers can exercise their right to care for their children during their first few months of life, without fear of losing their jobs or income.
- **Design** and implement types of long-term and emergency leave that make it possible to extend care leave for children and other family members, including persons with serious illnesses, persons with disabilities and older persons that need support and care, including strategies such as collective bargaining and learning from good practices already developed by companies.
- **Ensure** adequate funding for benefits related to maternity, paternity and parental leave, as well as leave for long-term care or urgent reasons, in order to ensure effective access to these rights and avoid situations of discrimination or disincentive to exercise this right.
- **Through** social dialogue, create care policy specific to each country according to life cycle needs, including time off (leave), benefits (income security), access to services and the exercise of rights, thereby promoting gender equality and decent work.

GUTERRES DECLARES 'TROUBLE IN PARADISE'

IN SUPPORT APPEAL FOR THE CARIBBEAN

ZICO COZIER

Addressing Caribbean Community (CARICOM) leaders gathered in Barbados, the UN Secretary-General outlined three areas where unity can drive regional progress.

"The exquisite beauty of the Caribbean is famed the world over. But there is trouble in paradise."

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres sounded the alarm in his address to Caribbean leaders gathered at the opening ceremony of the 48th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM on 19 February 2025 in Barbados.

From the ongoing socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, to soaring debt and escalating extreme weather events, Guterres described a region beset by crises beyond its control and called for international solutions.

Against the backdrop of these compounding challenges, the CARICOM Summit is taking place at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre in Bridgetown under the theme 'Strength in Unity: Forging Caribbean Resilience, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development'. Heads of State and Government are expected to address a range of issues, including food security, climate change, reparations for historical injustices and regional integration through the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

In his address, Guterres outlined three key areas where a unified Caribbean is crucial for progress:

Unity for Peace and Security

Guterres emphasized the urgent need to address the crisis in Haiti, where gang rule has inflicted immense suffering on the population. He said that he would soon report to the United Nations Security Council on the situation in Haiti, including proposals on the role the UN can play to support stability and security and address the root causes of the crisis.

"It is my intention to present to the Security Council a proposal that is very similar to the one that we have presented for Somalia in which the UN assumes the responsibility of the structural and logistical expenditures that are necessary to put a force in place and the salaries of the force are paid through the trust fund that already exists. And if the Security Council will accept this proposal, we'll have the conditions to finally have an effective force to defeat the gangs in Haiti and create the conditions for democracy to thrive."

He commended CARICOM's support and reiterated his call for a "political process – owned and led by the Haitians – that restores democratic institutions through elections."

The Secretary-General also urged regional leaders to continue tackling the "weapons and drug trafficking that is fueling violence across the Caribbean", even while appealing to "countries of origin and countries of destination" for stronger cooperation in waging this battle.

Unity for Climate Action

Acknowledging the disproportionate impact of climate change on the Caribbean, Guterres stated, "You face a deplorable injustice: A crisis you have done next to nothing to create is wrecking economies, ruining lives, and threatening your very existence."
He called for renewed commitment to limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and urged G20 countries to lead in the delivery of ambitious climate action plans. All member States adhering to the Paris Agreement are required to submit new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2025, aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Guterres also stressed the need for increased climate finance, adaptation measures, and meaningful contributions to the Loss and Damage Fund.

"You must be able to find new innovative sources of financing and namely to finally put serious a price on carbon.

Unity for Sustainable Development

Guterres emphasised the global challenges in financing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), noting that debt servicing consumes funds while international financial institutions remain underpowered. He praised Caribbean countries for their leadership in pushing for change, stating, "Caribbean countries have been at the forefront of the fight for change – pioneering bold and creative solutions."

The Secretary-General highlighted the progress marked by the Pact for the Future, which commits to advancing an SDG Stimulus of $500 billion a year. He noted that the Pact calls for considering structural vulnerabilities in access to concessional funds, including through the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI). Additionally, it calls for representation in international financial institutions to "correct for the world's vast inequalities and injustices," and for effective action on debt.

Guterres urged the implementation of these commitments and emphasized the importance of ensuring all countries can benefit from sustainable development technologies by delivering on the Global Digital Compact.
The Secretary-General concluded his address by acknowledging the power of Caribbean unity.

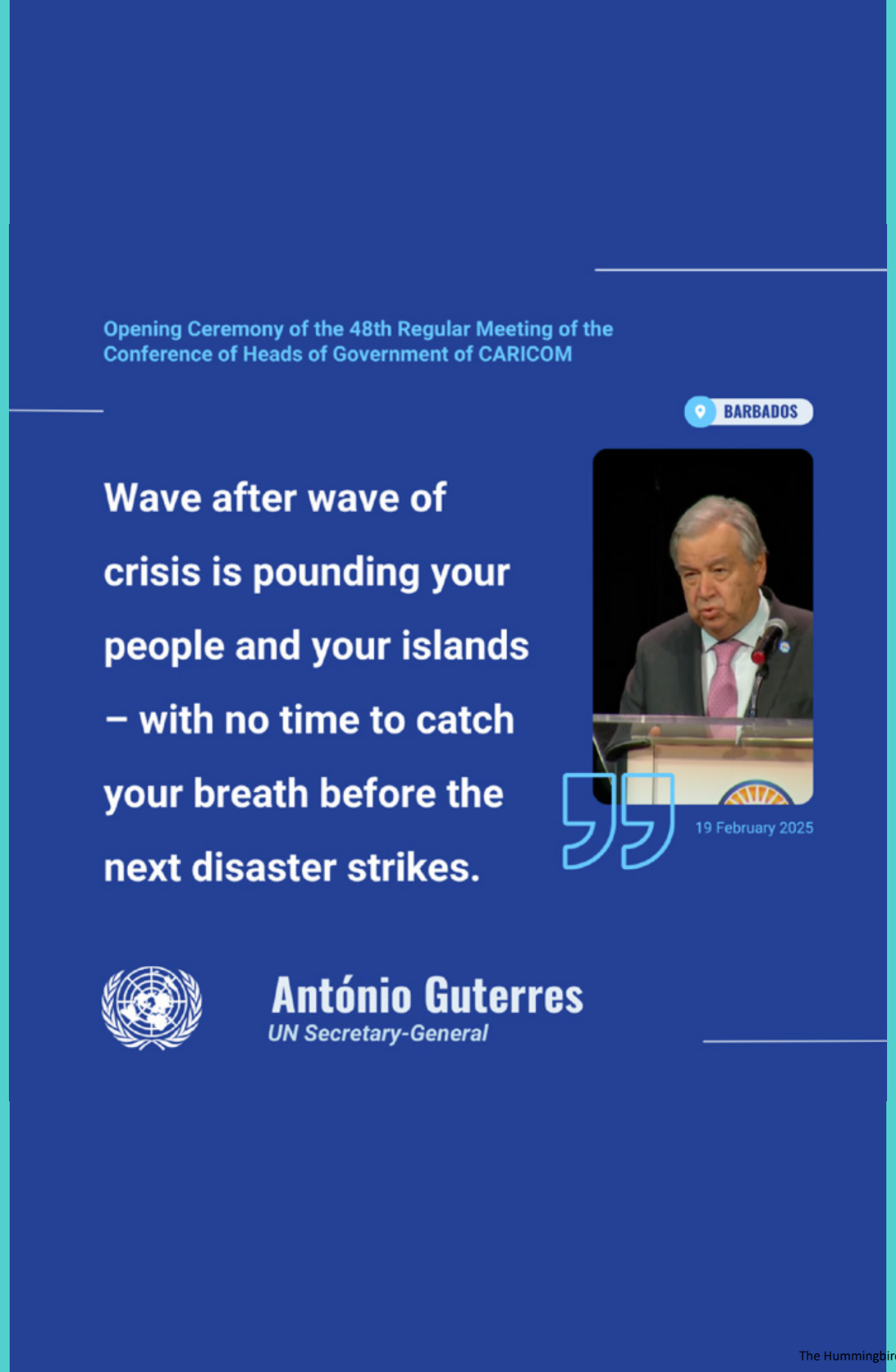
"A unified Caribbean is an unstoppable force. I urge you to keep using that power to push the world to deliver on its promise." — UN Secretary-General António Guterres

CARICOM-UN Partnership

The Secretary-General met with Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley on the day of the opening ceremony, expressing appreciation of Barbados' active role as current Chair of CARICOM: Caribbean Community.

He underscored the strong CARICOM-UN partnership and commended Barbados for spearheading efforts to advance reforms to the international financial architecture through the Bridgetown Initiative 3.0 — a call for urgent and decisive action to reform the framework of institutions, policies, rules, and practices that govern the global financial system.

The Secretary-General and the Prime Minister exchanged views on regional and global issues, particularly the situation in Haiti, climate change and the global agenda for antimicrobial resistance.



THE Humming Bird KITCHEN

SALTFISH ACCRA

CARIBBEAN FRITTERS

Servings: 15–20 fritters
Prep Time: 25 minutes (plus soaking time)
Cook Time: 10–15 minutes

Here's a traditional and flavorful Caribbean Saltfish Accra recipe — crispy on the outside, soft and savory inside, and packed with herbs and salted cod. This dish is popular across the Caribbean, especially in Trinidad & Tobago, St. Lucia, Dominica, and Grenada.

What you will need:

- 1/2 lb (about 225g) salted codfish (saltfish)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 cup water (adjust for batter consistency)
- 2–3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 stalks scallion or green onion, finely chopped
- 1–2 sprigs thyme (fresh or dried)
- 1 small hot pepper (like Scotch bonnet), deseeded and finely chopped (optional but traditional)

Instructions:

1. Prepare the Saltfish
Rinse excess salt from the saltfish. Boil in water for 10–15 minutes to remove more salt. Drain and taste. If still too salty, boil again or soak overnight. Once desalted to your liking, flake the fish with your fingers or a fork, removing bones and skin.

2. Make the Batter
In a bowl, mix the flour, baking powder, and a little black pepper. Add the saltfish, onion, scallion, thyme, pepper, garlic, and parsley. Slowly mix in water until a thick batter forms — it should be spoonable but not runny.

3. Fry the Accra
Heat oil (about 350°F / 175°C) in a deep frying pan or pot — at least 2 inches deep. Drop heaping teaspoons of batter into the oil. Fry in batches, turning occasionally, until golden brown (about 3–5 minutes). Remove and drain on paper towels.

Serve With
- Pepper sauce or tamarind sauce
- As an appetizer, snack, or side with bakes, plantains, or ground provisions

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