



STATEMENT

BY THE

SECRETARY-GENERAL  
CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)  
HIS EXCELLENCY IRWIN LAROCQUE

AT THE

THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF 18 31 00 1 3



Mr President, Excellencies, may I at the outset thank the Government and People of Ethiopia for the excellent hospitality and arrangements made to facilitate the conduct of this Conference. May I also congratulate the Co-facilitators on their outstanding role in the preparatory process leading to the outcome of this Conference.

I address this Conference because of the immense importance to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) of the issues on which it is focussed. The Community views this Conference as the first of three vitally important processes in 2015, all inter-linked, and all critical to the sustainable development of our Region.

In 2002, at the First Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey, the Member States of the Caribbean Community had set out the development gaps and resulting inequalities between the developed countries and Small Island Developing and Low Lying Coastal States (SIDS). Today, the situation is even more acute, with the development gains of CARICOM Member States under threat from persistent low or negative growth, the lingering





Mr President, a serious challenge for CARICOM States is their high levels of indebtedness and extremely burdensome debt servicing. It must be noted that a significant portion of the debt is due to exogenous shocks and from the reconstruction after natural disasters. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), the economic cost of natural disasters in the Caribbean between 2000 and 2014 is estimated at US\$30 billion. The World Bank estimates that the average annual natural disaster losses in the Caribbean is US\$850 million, while in the Pacific the average is US\$200 million per year. This underscores the fact that the Caribbean is one of the most natural disaster prone regions in the world.

It is not surprising that five (5) of our Member States are among the most highly indebted countries in the world,

SIDS debt and the criteria for access to concessional financing needs urgent attention within a strengthened FfD framework in order to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

I call for strong collaborative action among the development partners such as the UN and its agencies, the International Financial Institutions, the OECD, and the Commonwealth, to address these issues in a focussed way. The UNDP is well poised to co-ordinate this process.

Mr President, this year provides a unique opportunity for the international community and its leaders to focus their efforts on developing an effective programme of action to end poverty, contribute to reducing the persistent economic gap between developed and developing countries, and transform the world to better meet human needs. This can be done while protecting the environment, ensuring peace, equity and promoting basic human rights.

I thank you