

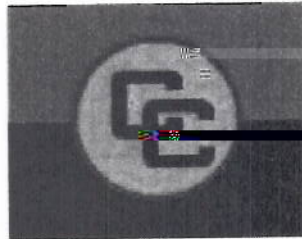


PERMANENT MISSION OF
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY RAYMOND D. WATKINS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)



ON THE OCCASION OF THE RESUMPTION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

65TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2012

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HIS EXCELLENCY RAYMOND O. WOLFE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)



ON THE OCCASION OF THE 26TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

TUESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2012



Madam Chair,

I speak on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which are honoured to participate in this 9th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I so much know me to thank you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and assure you of CARICOM'S full support and attainment of a successful outcome to the session.

I further wish to thank the Secretariat and the Bureau for the information provided, which will inform our deliberations and also enable us to take on concrete measures on the way forward.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Algeria and Chile speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean countries (CELAC) respectively.

Madam Chair,

CARICOM States are committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women, including rural women.

In keeping with this, all CARICOM Member States are urged to take measures to ensure that women realize their full potential as individuals while making meaningful contributions to society.

The Commission's priority theme this year addresses the critical issue of the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges. Although the emphasis is on women, it is not to be generic there are sharp distinctions in the experience of urban and rural women.

These differences require the adoption of more targeted approaches in dealing with the empowerment of rural women, who additionally play multiple roles including full farmers, seasonal agricultural workers and care givers.

In the context of the negative impact of the ongoing global financial and economic crisis, several rural communities within our Member States have experienced a downturn in various economic activities and a consequent rise in unemployment wherein women have been disproportionately affected.

Madam Chair,

I further wish to thank the Secretariat and the other presenters for the report on rural women, which has played an important role in the economies of our Member States. However, the need for economic diversification has resulted in a reduced focus on the agricultural sector impacting the livelihoods and empowerment of rural women, who tend to be largely employed in the agricultural sector.

In recognition of the continuing importance of agriculture to rural development, in July 2009, the Heads of Government of the states of the region CARICOM adopted the Trinidad Declaration, which underscored the need to "maximize regional agricultural production to meet our food security, nutrition needs, address poverty alleviation as well as income and employment generation."

To this end, Heads of Government have been promoting the production and consumption of locally produced food. One element of this, the "Eat what you grow" campaign, outlines the empowerment of rural women, including their contribution in food and nutrition education to guarantee their role in agriculture and small scale farming.

Within CARICOM, actions to empower rural women varies from state to state, taking into account the proportion of rural to urban population, which according to FAO

data in 2006 ranges from 11% to 90%. As a consequence, some states have implemented national plans for the empowerment of rural women. These plans have identified key focal points to ensure that the perspective of rural women are taken into consideration and/or have implemented such policy interventions that...

Madam Chair,

While action is being taken to empower rural women, further actions are clearly needed to ensure that rural women have access to better technology, information, as well as education and skills enhancement programmes that extend beyond agriculture.

CARICOM Governments have also demonstrated their support for Rural Women's Networks. For example, CARICOM in partnership with the Inter American Institute for Co-operation and Assistance (IICA) and FINNOM managed a rural women's empowerment capacity building for the Caribbean and Latin America Women's Entrepreneurs (CANROP). This workshop aimed at exposing rural women to intensive training in entrepreneurship, financial management, strategic planning, social skills and networking to effectively represent themselves in the ever-evolving business and social environments. The workshop also enabled rural women to deal more positively with changes to meet current and emerging global challenges that impact on their communities.

Madam Chair,

As we focus on the particular challenges faced by rural women, which are highlighted in the priority theme for this meeting, we call for the full implementation of the various Conventions and Agreements relating to women, with a particular emphasis on Article 17 of the CEDAW Convention, which safeguards access, benefits and full participation of rural women in the context of national development. This is in keeping with CARICOM's commitment to eliminating discrimination against women in rural areas and to ensure their empowerment in the pursuit of rural development policies.

CARICOM's rural women include indigenous women are a repository of creative, innovative and traditional knowledge that can be useful in addressing food security, prevention of environmental degradation and maintaining agricultural biodiversity. It is in this spirit that the upcoming Rio Plus 20 Conference in June this year will unequivocally articulate the commitment of CARICOM to the contribution of women, including rural women to hunger and poverty eradication and sustainable development.

I thank you.

As we focus on the particular challenges faced by rural women, which is reflected in the priority themes of this meeting, we call for the full participation of the various Caribbean Governments, starting with a particular emphasis on Article 1 of the CEDAW Convention, which safeguards access, benefits and full participation of rural women in the context of national development. This is in keeping with CARICOM's commitment to eliminating discrimination against women in rural areas and to ensure their empowerment in the pursuit of our development priorities.