



THE LILIENDAAL STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON FORWARD TOGETHER

The Civil Society **Forward Together Conference**, a historic consultation between the representatives of Civil Society in the 15 Member States of the Caribbean Community and the Heads of Government held at the Ocean View Hotel, Liliendaal, Guyana on 2-3 July 2002: Due to the events of September 11, 2001, the Task Force was only able to commence its work in November, 2001. Five meetings were held between November last year and May this year. The work programme of the Task Force was facilitated by six sub-committees that followed up on specific issue areas via e-mail, teleconferencing and regular meetings of the Task Force.

RECOGNISED the increased challenges to the Caribbean Community, posed by globalisation and the resulting complex economic, trade, environmental, social and legal issues.

DEEPLY CONCERNED about social conditions prevailing in the Community with regard to increasing transnational crime linked to trafficking in illicit arms and drugs; money laundering; the widening negative impact of terrorism; the migration of scarce skills; racism; ethnic insecurity, the high incidence of male dropouts; increased violence against women and children; persistent and increasing poverty, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic eroding the Region's human capital.

ALSO RECOGNISED that the objective of achieving the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) is not only a response to globalisation, including the impending Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), but is of the greatest value for a more coordinated system to enhance the Region's competitiveness, given our historical realities.

ACKNOWLEDGED that Civil Society has a vital role to play in the development of regional, political and social policies, the development of those programmes and frameworks currently in existence, their modification, where necessary, and the creation of new areas as required.

CONSIDERED that the establishment of mechanisms for continuous dialogue between the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community and Civil Society is an essential way to complement relevant programmes to ensure social reconstruction, cohesiveness, peace, poverty reduction, and equity that would enhance regional integration and make the Community more economically viable.

AFFIRMED in this context, the importance of programmes with regard to youth, labour, the elderly, people with disabilities, women, men and gender relations; sport, labour, education and training, health and access to technology; and programmes aimed at promoting respect for the rights and aspirations of our indigenous peoples.

AGREED on several broad principles for strengthening the relationships between the Caribbean Heads of Governments and national governments and the Civil Society as follows to –

- Institutionalise the Forward Together process in the form of more regular engagements between the Civil Society and the Heads of Government, a triennial engagement as suggested;

- Emphasize the need for more constructive participation of Civil Society representatives in appropriate decisions making Organs of the Community such as the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), the Council for Finance and Planning (COFAP), the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD), etc.;
- Establish a Task Force, comprising a small representative group of the Civil Society, coordinated by the CARICOM Secretariat, to develop a comprehensive regional strategic framework for carrying forward the main recommendations of Forward Together Conference and report to the Conference of Heads of Government at its next Inter-Sessional Meeting in 2003.

The work of the Task Force should be guided by the recommendations of the three Working Groups at the Forward Together Conference –

- Human Resource Development with Equity, including issues in relation to Gender, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Migration and the Diaspora;
- Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) - Capital Investment and requirements for competitiveness; and
- Governance and Participation