



PRESS RELEASE

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(CARICOM Secretariat, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana)
Remarks by His Excellency Edwin Carrington,
Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community

On the Occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the Inaugural Symposium:
Current Developments in Caribbean Community Law
at
The Hyatt Regency Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
9 November 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is for me a signal honour to have been invited to Chair this afternoon's proceedings, and in that capacity, my first order of business is to bid you all welcome today to the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

It is not by way of accident but rather by way of good design, that the event, of which we are marking the opening, is styled the Inaugural Symposium. By inaugural, there is a clear indication of a ground-breaking, of a beginning, of an event of a seminal nature. This Symposium organized by the Caribbean Law Institute Centre (CLIC), is intended to be all that - I say intended, because it is the exchange of views, the clash of ideas and the cross-fertilisation of opinions that emerge here over the next two days, that will transform this intention into reality.

That having been said, I want to thank all those involved in the organization of this Inaugural Symposium, and in particular, the Executive Director of CLIC Professor Winston Anderson, for the foresight that has been displayed in conceiving of an event such as this. The significance of this symposium cannot be lost on us: it has come at an all too opportune moment, as we in the Community continue to consolidate our methodologies towards a rules-based system of ordering our affairs, guided in so doing by the judgments of our own Caribbean Court of Justice. Again, this Symposium is proof positive of the essential position that CLIC and the University of the West Indies must maintain in the arena of research and in their overall contribution to mainstream thinking within our Region.

And latterly, but no less so, this Symposium is a manifestation of the types of positive collaboration that can be pursued between the CARICOM Secretariat, CLIC - itself an Associate Institution under Article 22 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas - and also with the CCJ, whether it be in relation to the organizational or logistical aspects, to bring about an outcome that would impact on the Community at large and its stakeholders. On this last point regarding Professor Anderson's foresight, let me say that it is clear to me that the sojourn he spent in the CARICOM Secretariat has had a positive and lasting effect on the former General Counsel, now Executive Director of CLIC.

It is apposite on this occasion, I believe, Ladies and Gentlemen, for some of the reasons stated above, for us to reflect somewhat on from whence we came, and how did we arrive at this point in time?

From the inception in 1973, the Caribbean Community has based its development and advancement in its constituent instruments - viz: The Treaty of Chaguaramas of 1973; and the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community and including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy of 2001.

The transition from the 1973 Treaty to the current Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas reveals a level of maturation of the Caribbean Community overtime which has been reflected in the application of various legal instruments by its Member States. Concomitant with this evolution are a number of instruments and entities designed to interpret and/or apply the provisions of these two treaties, chief among which is the Caribbean Court of Justice. During this Inaugural Symposium, it is hoped that you not only refresh your knowledge of the history of CARICOM, but also be convinced that the progress has not ended with the entry into force of the Revised Treaty in 2006. On the contrary, the reality is that the evolving process of integration and development is one that is not always smooth or even-paced. It certainly is not for the faint of heart and only the determined and resolute are likely to see it through.

For example, the European Union from whom we borrow a lot, did take thirty-five years - 1957 (Treaty of Rome) to 1992, to achieve its Single Market (also known as the Marche Unique). We in turn did take from 1973 - the Treaty of Chaguaramas - to 2006, that is thirty-three years, about the same, to achieve our Single Market - such as it currently is:

- Free movement of goods
- Free movement of services
- Free movement of capital
- Free movement of skilled labour
- Right of establishment
- Common standards (CROSQ)
- A Community Development Fund

There are other positive dimensions of our integration arrangements beyond the areas of the economy and trade, such as human and social development, or functional cooperation, security cooperation, and to a certain degree, the coordination of foreign policy, which have all served to dispel any notion that this is a time for despair and hand-wringing.

The welcome lesson here is that too much has already been achieved, too much remains to be achieved and too little by way of alternatives lies ahead of us.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with this perspective that I see the significant contribution of this Symposium involving as it does, two of our most critical integration institutions, the University of the West Indies and the Caribbean Court of Justice, assisted by the CLIC, as they seek to bring to bear their enlightened and weighty perspectives on our regional integration and development process, a process which is designed to enhance and sustain the economic and social development of our peoples.

Against this background, it is my pleasure to introduce the first of four distinguished speakers to the podium.

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