

**Closing Remarks at Opening Ceremony for Inaugural
Symposium on Current Developments in Caribbean
Community Law**

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&

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman:

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Protocol having been clearly established, please permit me simply to make the following closing remarks.

This Inaugural Symposium is the work of three organizations: The Caribbean Law Institute Centre (CLIC) of the University of the West Indies; The Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARISEC) through its CSME Unit; and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ).

On behalf of the Organizers, I should like to thank, most sincerely, all those persons who have helped to ensure we have had such a splendid start this evening.

We are very grateful to the Rt. Hon Michael de la Bastide, President of the Caribbean Court of Justice, and to the Hon.

David Thompson, Prime Minister of Barbados, for their inspiring and impactful speeches. I know I have your permission to say that their remarks were very well received. Far from inflicting cruel or inhumane treatment, *a la* the presidential humour, their perspectives are and will remain land-mark considerations for the remainder of this Conference. Thank you, Mr. President and thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has been most generous in their support, as evident in the liberal words of Ambassador Dr. Cuthbert Joseph delivered on behalf of Prime Minister Patrick Manning. As we are all aware, Ambassador Joseph is among the plenipotentiary and extraordinary advocates of Caribbean integration. We humbly ask that he conveys our gratitude to Prime Minister Manning.

Our Chairman, my former boss, H.E. Edwin Carrington, is due a great debt of gratitude for his usual grace and dexterity in presiding over this evening's proceedings. Dr. Carrington has for a very long time been, and will always remain, of course, among the icons of Caribbean nationhood.

And, not to forget the side on which my bread is presently buttered, I would want to thank my current boss, Prof. E. Nigel Harris, Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, for his remarks this evening, as well as for his untiring encouragement, support and inspiration during the journey to this event.

We would also like to thank the very many distinguished ladies and gentlemen assembled here in such significant numbers. We are grateful for the presence of eminent persons from the Government, Parliament, the Judiciary, the Bar, the diplomatic corps, academia, labour, and the various echelons of industry and business. Your presence here

means a lot to us, and to the cause which this conference seeks to serve.

A special word of gratitude to the European Union without visionary support this wonderful event would not have been possible.

And we are grateful to the Hyatt Regency and to Media 21 and all other persons responsible for the pleasant and apposite ambiance in which we have enjoyed this opening ceremony. We are also very thankful for the support from the Hugh Wooding Law School, its Principal and Students.

To look forward, we would like to thank, in advance, our very distinguished Team of Presenters who will be taking the floor from tomorrow morning. They have come from far and near, from academic from the bar and bench, and from the world of commerce and economics, to share their expertise with us, and we are grateful.

This Symposium is intended to be an annual, or at worse biennial, forum for discussing Current Developments in the Law of the Caribbean Community.

The flagship of the Community is the work in progress commonly known as the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, and which will therefore come under particular scrutiny during these regular gatherings.

The CSME cannot long survive merely a legal construct administered by policy-makers and enforced by the courts. Its success depends upon its familiarity to, and acceptance by, the people of the region and also upon its efficiency in achieving the objective of sustainable economic advancement for the Caribbean.

The vibrancy of the CSME is, in turn, contingent upon a robust discourse between policy-makers and the public; between those who make and administer the law, and those

offering constructive criticism based upon their varied experience and training.

This Symposium is intended to be the forum for that discourse.

Immediately following this opening ceremony, the generosity of the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago, in hosting a cocktail reception, will be on display. We ask that you be moderate with this generosity, not out of concern for the depth of pocket of the Attorney General, but only because utmost mental acuity will be seriously required come tomorrow morning at 9am.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our community can take heart in the distance we've already traveled, in the past upon which we build the future.

We thank all of you for your interest and support in being part of the exciting phase of the journey whose commencement is marked by this inaugural event.

Thank you.