

STATEMENT ISSUED AT THE REGIONAL YOUTH FORUM
From the CARICOM Youth Ambassador programme
PARAMARIBO, SURINAME, 27 JANUARY 2010

We the young people gathered on the occasion of the First Special Youth Forum representing the 9 million young people of the Caribbean, recall the mandate given to the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD) at the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of CARICOM Heads of Government in July 2006 to undertake a “full scale analysis of the challenges and opportunities for youth in the CSME and make recommendations to improve their well being and empowerment.”

We take this opportunity to applaud the scope of work done by the CCYD in recording the voices of young people on the issues that affect their lives. The Report outlines recommendations which can be used to guide our regional leaders’ efforts to empower and build youth.

We endorse the findings and recommendations on behalf of the young people of the Region.

In addition to the issues outlined in the Report, we recommend further examination of the following issues:

Indigenous populations – there is need to address the specific issues affecting this demographic consistent with their traditions and cultural practices

Agriculture - We recognize the need for a support system of youth in Agriculture and entrepreneurship. The industry still provides an alternative to crime and violence and also increases the GDP of the region.

Climate Change – There is a need to recognize, implement, support policies and programmes geared toward mitigating the effects of climate change.

Health - Greater focus on and promotion of sexual reproductive health, rights and responsibilities in keeping with the Mexico Ministerial Declaration on Sexual Reproductive Health Education, the MDGs and the ICPD POA.

In the context of the Report, we **recommend** the following priorities for immediate action, in no particular order:

- Education & Employment
- Caribbean Identity
- Health
- Crime & Violence

In recognition of the 60 per cent majority share young people hold in the Region, we stand ready to be a part of the decision making process and; the implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes for the realization of the recommendations of the this Report.