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The Public Information Unit of the CARICOM Secretariat extends greetings for a Happy New Year to readers across the Region and beyond. It is our hope that 2011 brings with it peace, prosperity and new opportunities for forging stronger ties within the Community.

2010 was a challenging one for the Community; a year which began with the devastating earthquake in Haiti that claimed more than 300,000 lives and which triggered a series of consequences including the latest – an outbreak of the dreaded disease, cholera which continues to rack up a formidable death toll.

Haiti was thankfully spared from Hurricane Tomas which roared through Barbados, Saint Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines late October early November. Tomas was blamed for at least eight deaths in Saint Lucia, and left in its wake a decimated agriculture sector in both Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines and destruction to buildings in Barbados. The weather system also caused major damage in Tobago.

The hurricane struck Barbados first, as the island was mourning the loss of Prime Minister David Thompson, who succumbed to pancreatic cancer on 23 October. Prime Minister Thompson, who held the portfolio for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy in the CARICOM Quasi Cabinet of Heads of Government, was in office for just under three years.

In early August, His Excellency Edwin Carrington, Secretary-General, announced his intention to step down from his position by 31 December, 2010, after 18 years at the helm of the administrative office of the regional integration movement. His tenure brings to an end a period of service, with distinction, to the Caribbean Community.

Secretary-General Carrington presided over an era that saw, significantly, the revision of the founding Treaty of Chaguaramas, the widening of the integration movement to include non-English-speaking Member States, Suriname and Haiti and the increase in the number of Associate Members from one to five; the movement from a CARICOM Common Market to a CARICOM Single Market and the establishment of the foundation for the Single Economy scheduled to come on stream in 2015; and the creation of critical regional institutions and bodies among which are counted the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the CARICOM Competition Commission (CCC) and more recently, the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS).

Over his tenure, Mr. Carrington received awards from Member States of the Community, two of them during the last three months as Secretary-General.

In this edition of the CARICOM View, we pay special tribute to Secretary-General Carrington and reflect on his interactions with staff members who have worked closely with him.

One of the major events the Secretary-General attended prior to making the announcement to demit office, was the 2010 Exposition in Shanghai, China, where there was a CARICOM Joint Pavilion comprising booths of 14 Member States, and the CARICOM Secretariat and the Caribbean Development Bank which shared one booth. The Secretary-General was heartened at the cohesiveness displayed in the Joint Pavilion and was proud of the display of the CARICOM Secretariat, a first-time participant in a World Exposition. We provide snapshots of that visit as well as an insight into the thinking that went into the concept of individual booths and the expectations of Member States that participated in the six-month mega event.

This edition of the CARICOM View is the second online version of the magazine; the first was published in June 2010, as a result of a decision to utilize Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), in an effort to reach a broader cross section of the Caribbean public. We hope in time to get to the stage where we could have a feedback mechanism installed in the View so that we could benefit from your comments, questions and ideas on how to improve the magazine.
Following is the New Year’s Message from the Chairman of the
Conference of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean
Community,
The Honourable Tillman Thomas, 
Prime Minister of Grenada

Distinguished people of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), I
wish you a Happy New Year 2011.

As we welcome the second decade of the century and the New Year 2011, we must prepare ourselves to face and surmount the challenges which continue to confront us. The end of the first decade of this century was marked by the triumph of the human spirit over the ravages of nature as exemplified by the courage and resilience of the Chilean, Pakistani and Haitian people.

One year ago this month, two significant events occurred which have had lasting effects on our Community. The first was the calamitous earthquake of 12 January which devastated our Member State Haiti, taking a terrible toll in human lives and wreaking widespread destruction of property. The tragedy has continued with the dilatory response of the international community in meeting its financial pledges to assist in the reconstruction of Haiti.

By year’s end not even a quarter of the amounts pledged had been delivered with the consequent deleterious, ruinous and slothful effect on the rebuilding process. The Caribbean Community, spearheaded by the Special Representative of the Heads of Government to Haiti, the Most Honourable P.J. Patterson, will continue to use every opportunity and seek to devise fresh initiatives in order to accelerate the process in 2011. The situation in Haiti has been exacerbated by the outbreak of the cholera epidemic which, apart from having already claimed close to 3,000 lives, has stretched beyond the limit, the capacity of the Haitian Authorities already overburdened by the challenges posed in the aftermath of the earthquake.

The Caribbean Community recommits itself to continuing and intensifying its assistance to its beleaguered Member State in the year ahead.

The second event was the Special Summit on Youth Development which took place in Paramaribo, Suriname at the beginning of the year. At that landmark event, the report of the Caribbean Community Commission on Youth Development was presented to Heads of Government. The years of research and the voice of the Youth at the Summit clamoured for a quickening of the pace of the integration process and for the greater involvement of the young people of our Community in its decision-making.

That cry for the “quickening of the pace” was heard by Heads of Government and was translated into active consideration of new governance measures.

One of the main ideas in taking the necessary steps will be tested in this coming year with the establishment of the Permanent Committee of CARICOM Ambassadors (PCCA). This body heralds a new dawn for our Community. The Committee, in order to succeed, will need the full support of all, including the Heads of Government.

Our Administrative structure, particularly our Secretariat, will also be undergoing changes with the retirement of our long-serving Secretary-General, Sir Edwin Carrington. I would like to take this opportunity to record the greatest appreciation to Sir Edwin for his tireless and inspiring leadership over the 18 years that he served the Governments and Peoples of the Caribbean Community in that position. His is an example of the kind of devotion and commitment necessary if we are to achieve the goal of a viable, prosperous and secure Community for All. The Community will show its appreciation, when it confers on him its highest honour, the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC).

As we approach 2011, one of the greatest dangers to the existence of our Community of small island and low lying coastal states remains the effects of climate change – not least that of sea-level rise. As a world leader in the battle to restrict the limit of greenhouse gas emissions to ensure that global temperature does not rise more than 1.5°C Centigrade above pre-industrial levels, the Caribbean Community is striving to ensure its very survival. Already in the Pacific region, island states are losing land to the rising seas and this should serve as a warning for us to be even more strident in our demands to the industrial giants that we need them to limit the levels to no more than 1.5°C for us to stay alive.

It is against this background and many other challenges, including the continuing effects of the global financial and economic crisis on our countries, that we enter the New Year. We are convinced that unless we believe in our integration movement and so demonstrate by strengthening its bonds significantly, unless we continue to build on the co-operation with each other, unless we are prepared to use all the skills and tools at our disposal to build a strong CARICOM Single Market and Economy – particularly those available through Information and Communication Technology – we will not be able to combat those challenges successfully.

Let us resolve therefore to make this year a watershed year in the history of our integration movement – a year in which a new generation of CARICOM leaders at all levels ensure that they play their part in building a strong, resilient and dynamic Caribbean Community and thereby take their place in history.

I wish you all a Happy, prosperous and productive 2011.
Several territories which were hit by Hurricane Tomas in October and November are now in the process of rebuilding, repairing and reorienting their outlook and policies to cater for the effects of natural disasters that CARICOM Secretary General Sir Edwin Carrington warned will visit the Caribbean.

“We must ensure we have the capacity to deal with disaster. It will come; it is not a question of ‘if’. Disaster is a part of our very existence and we must mainstream it in our activities,” the Secretary-General advised.

Saint Lucia suffered tremendous damage when Hurricane Tomas swept through the islands, killing eight, destroying the agriculture sector, disrupting public utilities and causing extensive damage through land and mudslides. The agriculture sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was decimated by the storm which also hit Barbados and Tobago.

Secretary-General Carrington late in November paid one-day visits to Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to get a first-hand look at the damage and discuss with officials ways the CARICOM Secretariat could assist in rebuilding efforts.

Landing in Castries, Saint Lucia, there was hardly any indication that a hurricane had swept across the island, with such devastating consequences. A 45-minute boat-ride and a short journey by road to the town of Soufriere, however, and the landscape changed, literally!

Bald sides of mountains were the first signs of the land- and mud-slides that, further inland, had swept away and buried buildings, felled trees and blocked roads.

While a short documentary the Secretary-General viewed prior to the journey to Soufriere provided some insight into the destruction, it in no way prepared him for what he saw on the ground.

“It’s one thing to have it described to you, but it’s quite another to actually see it. It touches you so deeply,” the Secretary-General said.

The hurricane has severely affected the country’s main income earner, agriculture, with a total decimation of the important banana industry and about 65 per cent destruction of other crops. Livestock drowned in the flood waters. It is estimated that it would take between six and nine months for the agriculture sector to regain its footing.

The education sector was hard hit, with schools losing roofs, furniture, computers and teaching aids. Schools began opening late in November, many on a shift system. The school term was also extended to cater for the time students spent away from school. About US$7M is needed to bring the sector back to a semblance of normalcy and the Education Ministry has launched an adopt-a-school drive help provide support to the education sector.
Clearing roadways that were blocked by land and mudslides in Soufriere, Saint Lucia.

Utilities and infrastructure were affected and challenges remained in the water sector, particularly in the south of the island.

Physical damage is estimated, preliminarily, at US$500 million. But the damage to the psyche of residents of communities that were hardest hit is immeasurable.

The scope of the community might never be recaptured, Secretary-General Carrington lamented, and would always be in the minds of residents.

He added that the CARICOM Secretariat had to assist in getting word out about what had occurred in Saint Lucia.

“People must hear and see what has happened,” he said.

Back in Soufriere, officials pointed to blocked roads near the Sulphur Springs, a popular tourist resort in Soufriere. It was difficult to imagine that main arteries had been there.

A 10-minute drive away, heavy duty equipment was clearing land in one area to accommodate tents for those persons who had been displaced by the storm, while in another section of the town, bulldozers and trucks were clearing mud and debris from blocked roadways.

The government of Saint Lucia was providing some assistance to help persons to rebuild their homes, and has also approached Member States for assistance with pre-fabricated housing.

“It's a task on our hands but we're up to it,” Prime Minister King said of the recovery effort.

In addition to a video depicting the hurricane’s damage to the island, a website has also been launched through which contributions could be made directly to the Disaster Relief Fund. The video can be viewed at http://www.finance.gov.lc/programmes/view/53.
As the first Anniversary of the catastrophic earthquake which rocked Haiti on 12 January 2010 looms, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is continuing its steady and multi-pronged support to this Member State.

At a recently concluded meeting co-ordinated by the Office of the Special Representative of CARICOM Heads of Government on Haiti, the Most Honourable Percival Patterson, and bringing together officials of the Government of Haiti, the CARICOM Secretariat, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and a cross section of the Diaspora Bank and regional private sector, progress was made in preparing projects in the priority areas determined by the Government of Haiti for submission to the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission (IHRC) which is working closely with the World Bank as the custodian of a US $5.8 billion Haiti Reconstruction Fund. The priority areas identified include housing and settlement development; physical and environmental planning; and infrastructure development and coordination. This meeting, called following discussions between Mr Patterson and the President of Haiti, His Excellency René Préval last December represents a critical step towards the development and reconstruction of Haiti.

The IHRC is co-chaired by former United States President Bill Clinton and Haiti’s Prime Minister Honourable Jean-Max Bellerive. CARICOM has secured a seat with voting rights on the Commission - a key mechanism established by the Government of Haiti and the international donor community to guide Haiti’s reconstruction process in accordance with its Action Plan for National Recovery and Development.

The Caribbean Community has been active in responding to President Préval’s request for CARICOM to spearhead advocacy and engagement with the international community on Haiti’s recovery and reconstruction. CARICOM Heads of Government and the Secretary-General have been vocal in their appeals for the international donor community to fulfill their pledges made at various fora to finance the reconstruction and rebuilding process. The Community continues to re-iterate this position and calls on the international community to honour their commitments to financing the reconstruction and rebuilding of that Member State.

CARICOM’s advocacy in support of its Member State continues its commitment of assistance which began within the critical first 48 hours of the disaster. On Wednesday, 13 January, less than 24 hours after the earthquake struck, under the system established by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Region’s response mechanism to natural disasters, Jamaica, as the sub-regional focal point deployed medical personnel and security forces to Haiti as a first response. The sub-regional focal point covers the area that includes in addition to Haiti, The Bahamas, Belize and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

In the critical days that followed, reinforcements poured in from CARICOM Member States and Associate Members as well as from civil society in the Region and the Diaspora in the form of food, medicine, clothing, artisans, military assistance, search and rescue teams, medical personnel and aircraft.

CARICOM’s political support to Haiti in the aftermath of the greatest humanitarian crisis in the history of the Region was illustrated by the visit of the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Honourable Bruce Golding on 14 January. Furthermore, then CARICOM Chairman, Honourable Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of Dominica and the Prime Ministers of The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, along with the then Secretary-General joined the President of Haiti at the first international meeting on the recovery and reconstruction of Haiti, in Santo Domingo on 18 January.

As efforts galvanized towards the development and reconstruction of Haiti, the importance of capacity building has been emphasised. The University of the West Indies (UWI) has provided critical support to restore that CARICOM Member State’s human resource capacity. It facilitated the placing of Haitian University students who were displaced by the destruction of their facilities into the Mona, Jamaica, Cave Hill, Barbados and St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago campuses to complete their courses of study.

The Secretariat has also continued its attachment programme with officials from Haiti’s Foreign Ministry being assigned to the Georgetown headquarters of the Secretariat on a rotational basis, in an effort to deepen understanding by Haitian officials of the procedures, processes and operations of the Community.

With agriculture being a key sector in Haiti which was buffeted by the disaster, UWI also committed its resources and expertise to work with Haiti to explore ways of reforestation of the hillsides and the other ways of preventing landslides.
In addition, the Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute (CARDI) is engaged in a seed-planting project with Haitian farmers in order to boost food production.

Even as these rebuilding efforts were in train, Haiti was struck by another disaster – an outbreak of cholera which has so far taken more than 3,000 lives and afflicted more than 100,000 persons. The Community has again responded and following the return of a scoping mission from Haiti, is refining the logistical arrangements to provide much needed medical assistance in consultation with the Ministry of Health of Haiti.

In keeping with the thrust to rebuild the country, work has also continued with respect to preparing Haiti to participate effectively in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). It is being assisted in its preparations by the Secretariat, led by the CARICOM Representation Office in Haiti (CROH) which was re-opened in 2007 with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

As a first step towards the CSME, Haiti was due to enter the trade in goods regime of the Single Market in January 2010 but could not do so because of the earthquake. To assist in stimulating economic activity, the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in December, approved a request for some Haitian products to be exported within the Single Market on a non-reciprocal preferential basis for three years.

Consultations are on-going towards approval of additional items from an original list which Haiti submitted. The concession became effective from 1 January 2011. CARICOM Secretariat officials are continuing their training exercises with Haitian customs officials to facilitate their understanding of the CSME’s trading regime.

In the area of governance, the Secretariat’s Assistant Secretary-General for Foreign and Community Relations, His Excellency Ambassador Colin Granderson, is integrally involved in the Haitian Presidential elections process as Head of the Joint Electoral Observer Mission of the Organisation of American States (OAS) and CARICOM. Ambassador Granderson has been based in Haiti since October in carrying out this mission.

Especially noteworthy in the response to the crisis in Haiti has been the support of CARICOM’s International Development Partners. The Governments of Australia and Spain as well as UK Department for International Development (DFID), the European Union, the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) and USAID have all rendered significant and much appreciated assistance to the Community’s efforts to help in the recovery, redevelopment and reconstruction phases in the aftermath of the earthquake disaster and in response to the cholera epidemic.

The Caribbean Community is now in a position to assess the benefits of its involvement in the just-concluded Exposition 2010 in Shanghai, China, but from preliminary reports from exhibitors on the ground, the participation will bear fruit economically, and further consolidate relations with the Asian giant.

Fourteen CARICOM Member States had booths at CARICOM Joint Pavilion at the Exposition which started on 1 May and concluded on 31 October under the theme ‘Better City; Better Life’. The theme represented the common sentiment of mankind for a safer, better living in urban environments. According to the organizers, the theme reflected one of the central concerns of the international community for policy-making, urban strategies and sustainable development.

“The life of the Exposition was circulating around the CARICOM booth because of our music, our human activity”. – CARICOM Secretary-General
The first World Expo with a `city’ theme, the Expo 2010 brought together more than 200 countries and organizations with more than 73 million participants.

CARICOM Secretary-General Edwin Carrington who was also Commissioner-General of the CARICOM Section, paid several visits to Joint Pavilion in July and expressed pride at its ability to present a united front, yet maintain the distinctiveness of each participant.

"Each booth had that individuality and yet the Pavilion hung together as an effective unit, and it conveyed one Caribbean, one Community, one pavilion... It depicts how we are stronger together but have not lost our individuality,” the Secretary-General observed.

The Community held its own alongside architecturally breathtaking Pavilions and unique exhibits, with the booths, in the main, showcasing the history, culture, and economy of Member States.

The language barrier notwithstanding, thousands – the majority Chinese, some of whom had never heard of the Caribbean - visited the CARICOM Pavilion each day, delighting especially in the scintillating rhythms of the steelpan, of reggae, calypso and ska. And much to their delight, visitors were often given impromptu dance lessons by Caribbean nationals.

The visitors were lured by the beckoning landscapes, particularly the pink sands unique to Barbuda, by the impressive replicas of historic buildings in Georgetown and Bridgetown, by the popularity of Jamaican singers, athletes and food, by the portrayal of the Mayan ruins in Belize, and the flamboyancy of festival celebrations in The Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. Others, like Guyana, Suriname and St. Kitts and Nevis, attracted visitors with their eco-tourism themes while the Pitons in Saint Lucia proved quite a draw, as was the uniquely designed Grenada booth – shape of a nutmeg.
"The life of the Exposition was circulating around the CARICOM booth because of our music, our human activity. Interestingly enough, the young people – that is where they are getting together, dancing to our music. There they are, having a good time around the Caribbean," the Secretary-General said at the end of his visit to Shanghai in July.

"So I'm taking back to CARICOM not just 'Better City, Better Life', but I'll also add 'Better Together, Better Life', the Secretary-General said.

Apart from the promotion of tourism, some Member States were confident that the exposure in China also would attract investors to their shores. Success in that quarter has been measured by interest in, for example, Jamaica's Blue Mountain brand of coffee, and the combination of infrastructure and natural resources that Trinidad and Tobago offers.

The CARICOM View was on hand in mid-July, primarily for the CARICOM National Day observances at the mega-exhibition. We managed to button-hole some of the CARICOM representatives on the ground, even as they were busy attending to visitors, stamping the ubiquitous Expo 'passports' or paying attention to the myriad administrative details of running a booth.

**Antigua and Barbuda**

Over at the Antigua and Barbuda booth, Rachel Collis, National Coordinator, proudly showed off the unique pink sands of Barbuda, and a simulation of the country's two-mile beach. Huge posters of the sporting greats including West Indian cricketer Sir Vivian Richards hung in the booth. According to Ms. Collis, the number of visitors to the booth had exceeded expectation. Queries from them related in the main to tourism and although the booth did not have an investment component, there was some interest in investment.

**Barbados**

According to Justin Seale, who was manning the booth with the CARICOM View dropped in, and graciously took time off from stamping passports, visitors in the main wanted to know about Barbados' location, economy and culture.

A replica of the Barbados Parliament – the third oldest parliament in the western hemisphere - dominated the booth that also paid homage to cricket and depicted tourism-based activities.

**Guyana**

Guyana's main aim at Shanghai was to create destination awareness, Carla Chandra, Senior Statistics and Research Officer at the Guyana Tourism Authority said.
Designed by John Fernandes with guidance from GO-Invest, the booth featured a time tunnel showcasing Guyana’s cultural heritage and highlighted the country’s natural wealth.

There were murals depicting popular sites in Guyana, and replicas of Guyana’s historic buildings including the St. George's Cathedral, Red House, and the Bank of Guyana.

Jamaica

With Bob Marley’s ‘I wanna love ya’ segueing into ‘Gotta have Zion now’ in the background, Nelissa Hines, team member in the Jamaica booth, told the CARICOM View that her team was capitalizing on everything that was known about Jamaica.

All the components of ‘Brand Jamaica’ were on display in Shanghai – athletes, models, dancers, and of course its music. An entire music room was devoted to the evolution of Jamaican music, with the iconic Bob Marley, of course, as the centerpiece. In the commercial area, other team members were offering samples of export products – art, books about Jamaican food and culture, and coffee. Visitors to the booth had an opportunity to purchase coffee, jerk seasoning and other items Jamaica’s commercial thrust was to tap into the Chinese market with export-ready goods.

Jamaica said it was ready for business in areas such as construction, energy, and food. Representatives of companies who visited the booth showed an interest in agriculture, particularly in the rice and sugar sectors. Jamaica’s investment thrust in Shanghai included a presentation by Minister of Industry, Mr. Karl Samuda at an investment forum.

St. Kitts and Nevis

Darien Belle of the St. Kitts and Nevis Investment Promotion Agency said there was a steady flow of visitors to the St. Kitts and Nevis booth.

The main attraction was a replica of the scenic railway which itself has links to the sugar industry on the twin-island. Visitors, including Secretary-General Carrington and his wife, were able to trace the railway route via video while seated in the replica.
Suriname

Sculptures, art and craft, textiles, traditional items were on display in the Suriname booth, reflecting the multicultural nature of Suriname.

A portrayal of the rainforest was one of the pull factors for the booth, according to Ziff, Team Member in the Suriname Booth.

Trinidad and Tobago

By the end of July, Trinidad and Tobago’s oil and gas promotion as well as its enviable position as the creator of the steelpan, helped to spur the “good response” that Sherron Joachim, Investment Promotion Officer, Trinidad and Tobago, reported that the booth was eliciting. Representation of ‘ole time mas’ was the concept of the Trinidad and Tobago booth. The booth targeted investors in the main, she said. One slogan, found at strategic points in the booth declared ‘We are next…’ According to Ms. Joachim, the catchy slogan is meant to convey her country’s readiness for investment in areas as varied as ICT, finance, oil and gas, and agro-processing.
Profiles – Members of the Executive Management Committee, CARICOM Secretariat

Ambassador Lolita Applewhaite holds the post of Secretary-General (ag.) Amb. Applewhaite has a Masters in International Public Policy from the School of Advanced International Studies, the Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C., and a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science, from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques, Universite d’Aix-Marseille, Aix-en-Provence, France.

Ambassador Applewhaite has a wealth of experience in International Relations, Administration and Policy Formulation.

Before joining the CARICOM Secretariat she served in the Barbados Diplomatic Service for more than twenty years, holding postings in North America and Europe before concluding as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Barbados to Venezuela and to Brazil in 1992.

Ambassador Applewhaite has also served as Permanent Secretary in the Barbados Public Service in Ministries of the Environment, Tourism, International Transport, Education, Youth Affairs and Culture.

Immediately prior to her appointment as Secretary-General (ag), Ambassador Applewhaite served as Deputy Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community from 2003.

In his position as Assistant Secretary-General, Foreign and Community Relations, he has continued to work on issues related to Haiti. In this regard, he played a key advisory role in CARICOM’s diplomatic efforts in January-February 2004 to broker a negotiated solution to the political stalemate in Haiti. He also represents CARICOM at meetings of the key countries involved in the restoration of stability and democracy in Haiti. He has headed the Joint OAS-CARICOM Election Observation Mission in Haiti since August 2010.

He holds a Licence ès Lettres Françaises from the University of Bordeaux (1968), a Master of Arts in African Studies from the University of Ghana (1972), and a Diploma in International Relations from the Institute of International Relations of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus (1978). Ambassador Granderson was awarded the Trinidad and Tobago Chaconia Medal (silver) for public service in 1994.
Ambassador Irwin LaRocque assumed the position of Assistant Secretary-General, Trade and Economic Integration at the CARICOM Secretariat in 2005.

Ambassador LaRocque was educated at the University of New York and majored in Political Philosophy, Pure Economics and Political Economics.

Prior to his appointment as Assistant Secretary-General, he served as Permanent Secretary in various Ministries in Dominica for more than fourteen years, including in the Ministries of Trade, Industry, Enterprise Development, Tourism, and Foreign Affairs where he headed the diplomatic service. He also served as the principal advisor to the Government of Dominica on all matters pertaining to economic integration and regional and international trade.

Ambassador LaRocque has a wealth of experience in management, public administration, economic development, trade, foreign affairs and diplomacy. During the period when Dominica underwent a structural adjustment programme, Ambassador LaRocque was a member of the Cabinet-appointed Public Sector Reform Task Force, which included the private sector, trade unions and non-governmental Organizations, with responsibility for the overall management, planning and performance review of the public sector reform process. He also served as the Chairman of the Consultative Working Group, a public/private sector consultative and advisory committee appointed by Cabinet, with focus on the enabling environment for private sector development and growth.

He has served on several Boards, including the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center, Caribbean Export, the Dominica Agricultural, Industrial and Development Bank, and the Dominica National Development Corporation.

Ambassador Gail M. Mathurin, CD succeeds Ambassador Henry Gill as Director General of the Office of Trade Negotiations (OTN) of the CARICOM Secretariat, formerly the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM). Prior to this, Ambassador Mathurin was Permanent Secretary, and Head of the Foreign Service in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica.

Ambassador Mathurin was educated at the University of the West Indies and in subsequent years also attended the Hemispheric Trade Issues and the Trade Policy courses at Georgetown University in Washington D.C.

A career Foreign Service Officer in the Jamaican Foreign Service since 1979,

Ambassador Mathurin has undertaken several key diplomatic assignments including: Permanent Representative to the United Nations and its specialised agencies at Geneva, and the World Trade Organisation where she was also Coordinator of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group in the WTO Doha Negotiations, Geneva, and concurrently Ambassador non-resident to Austria, Greece, Egypt, Italy and High Commissioner to Cyprus.

Other assignments included: Senior Director and later Under Secretary Trade Division and Ambassador for External Negotiations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Jamaica, Ambassador non-resident concurrently to the Federal Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Argentina and the Republic of Uruguay, High Commissioner of Jamaica to the United Kingdom and concurrently Ambassador non-resident to Portugal, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Spain, Minister, Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the OAS, Washington D.C.

Ambassador Mathurin is a recipient of the Order of Distinction (Commander Class), which was conferred by the Government of Jamaica in 2007.
Maurice Odle is a BSc, MSc and Ph.D graduate of the London School of Economics and has a distinguished career as both an academic and international public servant.

He began his career as a Lecturer at the University of Middlesex and later became a Professor of Economics and Director of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Guyana and a Professional Fellow at the University of the West Indies. He has authored many books and articles, particularly in the area of money and finance and at one time was coordinator of the Regional Monetary Studies Programme.

After leaving academia, Dr. Odle had a 17½ year long stint in the United Nations system during which he was a Director, firstly in the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations in New York and, then, at UNCTAD in Geneva. While in Geneva, he founded the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA).

His publications in the area of monetary and financial economics include: The Significance of Non-Bank Financial Intermediaries in the Caribbean, UW1, 1972; Pension Funds in Labour Surplus Economies, UW1, 1974; Multinational Insurance Companies and Dependency Operations, UW1, 1979; Multinational Banks and Underdevelopment, Pergamon Press (New York) 1981; and Modern Management and Supervision of Financial Institutions (Co-Editor) United Nations (Bangkok and New York) 1992.

On returning to Guyana in 1997 he was appointed Technical Adviser in the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery. In 1999 he became Economic Adviser to the Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community.

A recent retiree – 31 December 2010 - from the CARICOM Secretariat and the Executive Management Committee is Dr. Edward Greene who held the position of Assistant Secretary-General, Human and Social Development from 2000-2010. He held responsibility for coordinating programmes in Education, Health, HIV/AIDS, Labour, Culture, Youth, Sport, Gender affairs and Crime and Security

Prior to his appointment at the CARICOM Secretariat, Dr. Greene served as Adviser, Health and Human Development at the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO).

Dr. Greene joined the staff at St. Augustine Campus, University of the West Indies (UWI) in 1969 as Junior Research Fellow immediately after graduating with a Doctorate in International Economic Relations from the University of British Columbia.

While at UWI, he authored eight books and more than 70 articles. Among the positions he held there were:

- 1993: First Professorial Fellow of the Institute of Social and Economic Research
- 1989-93: Pro-Vice Chancellor with responsibility for Development and Alumni Affairs
- 1989: Appointed Full Professor
- 1984-90: Director, Institute of Social and Economic Research

Dr. Greene has held appointments on several Boards of Directors and has been a consultant with many of the leading international agencies, including the Commonwealth Secretariat, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

We wish Dr. Greene well in his retirement.
‘Long, Tough Journey’ - Sir Edwin

Sir Edwin Wilberforce Carrington, a national of Trinidad and Tobago, has held the position of Secretary-General of CARICOM since August 1992, making him the longest serving Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community.

His distinguished career in Diplomacy and Development saw him serve as Deputy Secretary-General, and immediately thereafter, 1985-1990, as Secretary-General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) – the only Caribbean national to have held that position to date. In acknowledgement of his outstanding service, Carrington Hall at the ACP Secretariat (Brussels) is named in his honour.

Mr. Carrington, an Economist is the holder of the Trinity Cross, his country’s highest honour, as well as the Chaconia Medal (Gold), Trinidad and Tobago’s second highest honour.

He has also been honoured by other Caribbean States, being the recipient of the Companion of Honour of Barbados (CHB); the Order of Distinction of Belize; the Duarte, Sanchez Y Mella, Gran Cruz De Plata decoration of the Dominican Republic; the Cacique Crown of Honour (CCH) of Guyana, the Order of Jamaica, the Grand Officer in the Order of the Yellow Star of Suriname, and a Knighthood from Antigua and Barbuda.

Recognition of Mr. Carrington’s contribution to the Caribbean was expressed by the Caribbean Diaspora, through the conferring in 2001 of the Pinnacle Award by the National Coalition of Caribbean Affairs. United States Secretary of State Colin Powell was similarly honoured at that time.

Secretary-General Carrington is the holder of Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Economics, from the Universities of the West Indies and McGill University in Canada. He was also conferred with the degree of Honorary Doctor of Laws by the University of the West Indies and the City University of New York – CUNY (Medgar Evers College).
the distinction of being the longest serving Secretary-General of the regional integration movement.

It was a role he’d never envisaged in his youth or early adulthood not even in the days of the early West Indies Federation.

“I never thought of myself being directly involved in the integration process. But it’s a strange thing: I used to be excited as a young boy when you look at the West Indian Reader and the Geography books on the West Indian islands... Now I look back, it was an unexplained excitement about these islands, perhaps an innate desire to go there.

“Now I look back, I wonder what it was portending. But it has carried on from that excitement to the life I have lived. Those countries became part of my homeland,” Secretary-General Carrington said in an interview a few days before the Christmas holidays. It was also a few days short of his retirement and after rounds of farewell activities held in his honour.

The 18-year journey was long and tough, and his responsibilities were weighty.

“It was one which if you didn’t have the love, stamina and the guts for it, you couldn’t last long…”

Acute sense of responsibility

Secretary-General Carrington took his responsibilities very seriously, and challenged those around him to do the same. His work ethic was formidable, whether in the office or travelling around the Community and beyond. Those who have worked closely with him speak with admiration (and sometimes, consternation!) of his ability to keep long hours, leading from the front.

“As I look back over the years and as I often was moved to observe, I am not sure that the Secretary-General had not found the secret to a 25-hour day. The time of the day or the day of the week made no difference to what had to be done and he led from way in front. It would be impossible to calculate or understand the amount of time, mental, physical and other energy that he has dedicated to CARICOM matters,” said Ms Desiree Field-Ridley, Adviser, Single Market and Sectoral Programmes.

In the 90-minute interview with the CARICOM View, Sir Edwin oftentimes referred to Article 24 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas which sets out the role of the Secretary-General –

ARTICLE 24
The Secretary-General

1. .........

2. The Secretary-General shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Community and shall, subject to the determinations of competent Organs of the Community and in accordance with the financial and other regulations, perform the following functions:

(a) represent the Community;

“I had an acute sense of responsibility throughout, in the sense that you feel you are responsible for all things – whether you are the one actually doing it, whether it is your senior staff... That responsibility also became very acute especially when you go extra-regional. The role of the Secretary-General is to represent the Community. That’s your first role, and I was very conscious of that responsibility…” he said.

His sense of responsibility extended far and wide, to the Heads of Government, to Secretariat staffers, to the youth of the Community, and to the regional populace in general.

“All the staff in the Secretariat I considered my staff and I had a responsibility for them...and because of that I treated them as they are my staff. I am very, very concerned about their welfare at all times...I have had an open door policy - any and every staff member can see me if they wished - if they were prepared to wait,” he said.

He felt a special responsibility for the young people of the Region, for moulding them into “regional personalities, regional assets” and harboured some regret at what he felt was a insufficiency in informing, involving, and interacting with the youth of the Community. He said that the CARICOM Secretariat, Member States, and regional institutions had a role to play in bringing the youths firmly on board.
Particularly advocates of integration should comprise an adequate mix of personnel including a cadre of youth at all levels.

“And that is how that publication, `CARIFTA and the New Caribbean’ came into being, albeit with inputs from Mr Demas and other members of staff, of course,” he recalled.

Thereafter there were other publications and a series of town hall meetings throughout the Region to get the integration message to the regional population and to get them involved in the process.

With amazing powers of recollection, Sir Edwin cited dates, Member States and some of the comments and reactions that the town hall team garnered.

“I don’t think that overall there has been sufficient interaction with the population. It’s all well and good to write a book and put it out there for the students to read, but there is need for more personal interaction. We didn’t have enough of that. I believe that to move to the next stage, we will need more of that. Technology has moved on, you have ICT4D, there’s TV of course, and the social networking sites. What we have to do is to use those which now exist, which are the best, to achieve that objective.”

Journey highlights

Secretary-General Carrington’s tenure spanned the transition from the Caribbean Community and Common Market to the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and movement towards the Single Economy; the widening of the Community to include non-English-speaking Member States of Suriname and Haiti; as well as the range of new institutions that catered to the new needs of the grouping, among other major achievements.

In a farewell tribute to Sir Edwin, the Hon Bruce Golding, Prime Minister of Jamaica, referred to the progress the Region made under “his able leadership, through the steady pair of hands”.

“Dr. Carrington has served the Caribbean Community for many, many years and for eighteen of those years he was Secretary-General, a position that he held and discharged with great distinction and commitment. These were eighteen challenging years, eighteen years during which the CARICOM movement went through significant transition where we made significant advancement on the goals and objectives of the integration movement,” Prime Minister Golding said.

No doubt, Prime Minister Golding was also alluding to the challenges of the twin phenomena of globalisation and trade liberalization that practically dictated the direction the integration movement took.

“Those are among the forces that the Heads (of Government) foresaw in 1989 at the Grand Anse Meeting when they established the West Indian Commission under Sir Shridath Ramphal and that Report came back in 1992 and was considered by Heads. (As fate would have it, that 1992 meeting of 28th October was my first Heads of Government Meeting as Secretary-General of the Community.)

The main goal of the CSME has to date only been partially achieved – the Single Market in 2006 and the framework for the Single Economy scheduled to be in place by 2015.

“Since that Report there has also been increasing loss of preferential treatment in our critical market, Europe, and against that background, the institutions of the Community were adjusted to ensure as far as possible that we could respond adequately both to protect our interests and promote our aspirations,” Sir Edwin said.

“In that regard I must make reference to the many interactions of the Community with the European Union. Notwithstanding the loss of preferential treatment, those interactions on the whole were by no means negative. Not only has the Community’s institutional arrangements attempted to draw heavily from the European model but Europe has rendered its own unique and significant contribution to the development of our Community. Of course, it has not been a one-way process.

My own personal involvement stretched virtually over my entire integration experience starting from my work in CARIFTA, through to the ACP and back to CARICOM. In that entire journey the lessons learnt from my interaction with the nations of the EU, Africa and the Pacific have stood me in good stead in my work as Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community.”
Asked what he considered the greatest achievement under his watch, he responded: “I don’t think there is any one event or issue, but I consider keeping the arrangements together, enlarging it to take in new countries – Suriname, Haiti – revising the Treaty, upgrading therefore the whole integration arrangement bringing on board new structures and institutions with mixed results, the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), the Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians (ACCP), the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), the Caribbean Development Fund (CDF) – in other words, putting flesh on the body. We held it together, steady as it goes for a very long period.

“In a nutshell we kept CARICOM going, we enlarged it, we deepened it by the Single Market and Economy… we did all those things in that period and we are now able to deliver to the new round of leaders. You know we are the longest surviving integration grouping in the developing world, and for about half of that life, I have had the honour of being the Secretary-General. But I certainly didn’t do it alone. Apart from the able staff, our leaders and their Member States notwithstanding their difficulties played crucial roles in moving this process along,” he said. “And that is not to say that there is not much more that needs to be done,” he added, “but let us not fall victim to the tendency to ignore or belittle that which has been achieved in our justifiable concern regarding that which has not been done”.

And his regrets? Acknowledging at this point that there were only 24 hours in a day, Sir Edwin felt he did not have enough time “to intermingle with the people out there – with the children, the students, the private sector, the labour movement etc.” He explained that he had to operate as the Head of a ‘line section’ as well as oversee the entire operation which he suggested was “something we should try to avoid” in order to make for more time for such activities as meeting the people.

“I didn’t get enough time to meet with the youth; that would be my greatest regret. But I had to face the fact that if you were to give that time, something else would have had to pay the price.”

Punishing pace

The hectic, punishing pace that the former Secretary-General carried was a point of reference in many a conversation, particularly among those who may have accompanied him on missions, or those who were merely concerned observers.

Just how did he do it?

“Let us not equivocate: it has been extremely demanding but when you see some successes and you get the appreciation from your bosses, it somehow energises you for the next leg. But I cannot deny that it has been really demanding.

“The travel has been most necessary but most devastating on the body, on health …From my earliest existence in the Secretariat in 1970 as Chief of Economics and Statistics starting under William Demas, I learnt from him two things: One day I got annoyed when I had to attend certain meetings, especially when I was preparing a study or report. I went back chastened, but I saw the wisdom.
Even now with the videoconferencing equipment, it is never as effective as sitting across the table, a face to face meeting ...so still one has to travel more often than not.

“It has taken quite a toll on my body, the wear and tear... People say to me ‘how are you doing it’, but when you have to go and do a meeting, something that you know is important, something that you feel responsible for, something that you know you will be held responsible for,... you get there!

Quoting Article 24 (2a) of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Sir Edwin pointed out that the first duty of the Secretary-General was to “`represent the Community`, not `represent the Community when you were not tired, or when you feel that you could`. That is what you committed to do. If you can’t do it, you should give up the job”.

His mentors, the late William Demas and Sir Alister McIntyre, have been a constant inspiration during his work life, and gave him the kind of impetus he needed to get the job done.

“...there is always ...at the back of my mind, my mentors, William Demas and Alister McIntyre... I want to make sure those guys could say ‘he’s alright’ and to be able to do that with those two fellows...! It’s a kind of endorsement, knowing how they would feel. They would always be my mentors,” said Sir Edwin.

And what does Edwin Carrington do in his spare time?

“Edwin Carrington has had no spare time. The concept disappeared increasingly over time, until it came to nil, virtually,” he said dryly, recalling that the last real vacation he had might have been when he was a teacher, in August 1957!

He was quick to point out, however, that it doesn’t matter when one was enjoying what one was doing, “and I was enjoying what I was doing.”

Over the years, as Secretary-General, Sir Edwin met with at least 40 CARICOM Heads of Government.

“Most of the times I met Heads in groups, either at a meeting, in caucus, or at the Bureau. The one-on-ones that I had on occasion were not as frequent as one might have wanted.

Pressure and time, he pointed out, worked against those kinds of meetings.

“When we met as a group...I enjoyed a pleasant relationship with them... I always got a sense of respect and regard.

Florence boy has certainly come a long way. His is a household name and familiar face throughout the Community. He has been honoured by several CARICOM Member States and Third States, and, in the New Year, was identified to receive the Order of the Caribbean Community (OCC) the Community’s highest honour. The tributes to him on the following pages are testimony to the impact he has made on the Region, in the international arena, his vision, his philosophy, and his interaction with people from all walks of life.
Honours for the Secretary-General

Towards the end of his tenure, Secretary-General His Excellency Edwin W. Carrington was awarded the highest honours of the Republic of Suriname and Antigua and Barbuda.

He was conferred with the Grand Order of the Yellow Star of Suriname in October 2010 by His Excellency Desire Bouterse, President of Suriname.

In addition, the Surinamese youth, on behalf of the youth of the Region, also presented Secretary-General Carrington with the Youth Lifetime Award in recognition of his leadership and commitment to act in equal partnership with us, the future of CARICOM.

In November, the Secretary-General was knighted by Dame Louise Lake-Tack, Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda.

These awards are in addition to the highest honours from his native Trinidad and Tobago, the Trinity Cross and the Chaconia Medla (Gold) the second highest award of Tobago. The Secretary-General is also the recipient of the Companion Honour of Barbados, the Order of Distinction of Belize; the Duarte, Sanchez Y Mella, Gran Cruz De Plata decoration of the Dominican Republic, the Cacique Crown of Honour (CCH) of Guyana, and the Order of Jamaica.

On the following pages are snapshots of this year’s awards ceremonies in Suriname and Antigua and Barbuda.
Governor General Dame Louise Lake-Tack, Sir Edwin Carrington and Lady Patricia Carrington.

A toast to the awardees: From left are President of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Desire Bouterse, Secretary-General His Excellency Sir Edwin Carrington, Assistant Secretary-General Human and Social Development, Dr. Edward Greene, Chef de Cabinet, Office of the Secretary-General, Ms. Glenda Itiaba, Assistant Secretary-General, Trade and Economic Integration, Amb. Irwin LaRocque. At the function in Paramaribo, Suriname, Secretary-General Carrington was awarded the Grand Order of the Yellow Star of Suriname, while Dr. Greene was conferred with the second highest award, the Grand Sash in the Order of the Yellow Star. Both Secretary-General Carrington and Dr. Greene also received the Youth Lifetime Award from the youth of Suriname.

(From left) Senator the Hon. Dr. L Errol Cort, Hon. Trevor Walker, Hon. Dr. Jacqui Quinn-Leandro, Governor General Dame Louise Lake-Tack, Sir Edwin Carrington, Senator the Hon. Joanne Massiah, Prime Minister W. Baldwin Spencer and the Hon. Harold Lovell.
It was not your usual COTED Meeting. Not by any stretch of imagination.

In fact, the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), usually devoted to the tough business of charting the Community’s trade course, was on 3 and 4 December 2010, punctuated by emotional tributes, rounds of applause and at least one bout of spontaneous singing.

What was so different this time around? It was Sir Edwin Carrington’s last Meeting of the COTED as Secretary-General of CARICOM. Of the four Councils of the Community, it was the one to which he was closest, the one where, as an economist, he had found his footing.

At the official opening of the Meeting at the Prince Hotel, Providence, Guyana, the tributes began when the Hon Jennifer Webster Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Guyana praised Secretary-General Carrington’s “outstanding and invaluable contribution to CARICOM” pointing out especially the key role he played in moving the CSME from “a vision statement to where we are today”.

In a moving tribute that ended with his warm embrace of the Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, Trade and Economic Integration, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque pointed to Sir Edwin’s “tremendous contribution to the Secretariat and to the Region”, his generosity of time to provide direction, his great sense of the realpolitik of the Community and of integration, and the high currency attached to his name in the corridors of power, internationally.

“So SG, I want to say to you, thank you, thank you, thank you. That thank you comes from me and I guess from the Community,” he said to rousing applause.

In her opening address, Senator the Hon Joanne Massiah, the Chair of COTED, praised the Secretary-General’s outstanding tenure, and pointed to the pivotal role he played in the establishment of a number of key regional institutions and his assistance in the elaboration of the work of the COTED,

in particular negotiations leading to the crafting of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the implementation of its provisions.

“Indeed, Sir Edwin’s even temperament and steadfast hands at the wheel of CARICOM have guided the regional integration movement... Sir, you epitomize good professional regional stewardship and that is why the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda accorded you the country’s highest honour,” said Senator Massiah, Minister of State in the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Antigua and Barbuda.

At her invitation, delegates to the Meeting stood and applauded the Secretary-General for his “hard work and dedication”.

Leading the tributes on the final day of the Meeting Friday, the Hon Karl Samuda, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Jamaica, said it was a pleasure and honour to be exposed to the Secretary-General’s leadership. His experiences with the Secretary-General, he told the Meeting, were ones he “would cherish for the rest of his life.”

He alluded to Sir Edwin’s quest for the upliftment and development of the social and economic circumstances of the people of the Caribbean that was done in a “calm, sophisticated and selfless way.”

On behalf of the Government of Jamaica, Minister Samuda wished the Secretary-General continued good health and hoped that he would continue to make a contribution to the development of “this great Community called CARICOM.”

Senator, the Hon. Haynesley Benn, Barbados’ Minister of Trade and Commerce - participating in his first COTED Meeting - broke into song, and soon, the delegates were all singing ‘For he’s a jolly good fellow’.

Dr. Carl Francis, Permanent Secretary in the Trinidad and Tobago’s Ministry of Trade and Industry first met the Secretary-General in Brussels and said that the encounters all resulted in smart learning experiences. A great deal of what he had learnt about international diplomacy was at the feet of the Secretary-General.

In response, Secretary-General Carrington, clearly moved, congratulated Senator Massiah on her stewardship as Chair of the Meeting and said the conduct of the sessions was the most fitting way to mark his final meeting of the Council to which he was so closely attached.

“This was very special. Perhaps the powers that be upstairs arranged to have this done for me,” he said, as he embraced her.
Reflections

“A hard act to follow”

Dr. Edward Greene
Assistant Secretary-General
Human and Social Development

The Most Illustrious, Excellency, Grand Master, Sir Edwin.

These are all accolades so richly deserved for one who has contributed so much to so many across the Regions of Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific. Many deservedly glowing tributes have already been made to your remarkable tenure at CARICOM.

Conceiving, much less and writing anything unique is a demanding challenge. As a long-standing friend and colleague, I have always been in admiration of your ability to weave thoughts and actions to achieve solutions. Your task at the helm of the CARICOM Secretariat for more than eighteen years required the steely character and genuine commitment to the cause of regionalism that so few mortals possess. It demanded resolute will, passion, dedication and love for the people of this Region to so persistently advocate that “better must come”.

SG is someone who has always given of his time, even at the wee hours of the morning, when you want to find him in any part of the world to give advice, to give direction. He is someone I admire for so many reasons chief among them being that he possesses a great sense of the realpolitik of the Community and of the politics of integration. Edwin Carrington has a great sense of the politics of integration. He has a great sense of anticipating, and correctly so, the political mood of integration, what may happen and what may not happen, and he has a great sense of the right moment to introduce items to the Regional agenda.

SG is a keen listener. He always seeks advice, but at the end of the day when a difficult decision is to be made he would always advise that we place it in the Secretary-General’s name, not because he was asserting his authority, but because in the case of any fallout, he wanted to ensure that his staff and his advisers were protected. That is something I really admire about him.

SG has been recognised by many Member States in the Community with their highest awards; we have a standing joke among us about which of his titles we should address him by.

As far afield as you can think of Secretary-General Carrington is known. It always amazes me when we travel, the high currency value that is placed on his name, from Brussels where he lived before coming to the Secretariat more than 18 years ago, to Washington.

I want to say ‘thank you, thank you, thank you’. That ‘thank you’ comes from me as well as from the Community.

In addition, you have taken the Region to the brink of the illusory, Single Economy, not even attained in the most advanced integration system, the European Community. In this regard your legacy would ever be recorded in the annals of integration history, not only in the Caribbean, but globally, as attested to by the countless regional and international awards bestowed on you over the years. It is not without significance that your surname (Carrington) intersects with CARICOM. It is as if you have been destined to “carry”, CARICOM. You did, and did it well. Yours will be a hard act to follow.

The people of this Region will ever record an inadequate appreciation for the superlative service that you have given, Oh! Most Illustrious One.

Peace and love.

SG has great sense of realpolitik of the Community

Amb. Irwin LaRocque
Assistant Secretary, Trade and Economic Integration

How do you pay tribute to someone who has made such a tremendous contribution to the Secretariat and the Region, someone who has been a mentor, a leader, a friend?
"Privilege, honour to serve under Sir Edwin"

Ms. Glenda Itiaba
Chef de Cabinet,
Office of the Secretary-General

It has been my privilege and honour to serve under Secretary-General Sir Edwin Carrington during his tenure as Chief Executive Officer of our Community. I say so having spent the better part of my professional life working directly with him at the CARICOM Secretariat.

The most obvious trait of Secretary-General Carrington is his unwavering commitment to the enterprise of our integration movement. This commitment and dedication has steadied and bolstered him and the Staff of the CARICOM Secretariat over the sometimes very challenging periods during these past eighteen years. His commitment has been a source of inspiration and admiration for me and indeed several of my colleagues in the organisation. I have also been struck by his political astuteness and his ability to interact effectively with Member States at all levels. In tributes to him, following the announcement of his demission, some Heads of Government have described him as “consummate diplomat, scholar and gentleman”, “a true integrationist” and “very fair and balanced in his dealings with all Member States and Associate Members”.

Those of us who have worked with Secretary General Carrington directly and consistently over the years, would certainly endorse these tributes.

The Staff of the Secretariat also owe Secretary-General Carrington a debt of gratitude for it was through his vision and determination that we concluded the arrangements with the Government of Guyana for the construction of our Headquarters building – a national and regional landmark.

On behalf of my colleagues in the entire Office of the Secretary-General, I thank you Secretary-General for your mentorship, advice and guidance; your contribution to our professional growth and development; and most importantly for your service to and leadership of our beloved Community.

"He led from way in front"

Ms. Desiree Field-Ridley
Adviser
Single Market and Sectoral Programmes, CARICOM Secretariat

I think one of the striking features of interaction with the Secretary General is the evidence of his commitment to things Regional. I came back to the Secretariat with Edwin Wilberforce as Secretary General and to the early stages of the revision of the Treaty of Chaguaramas leading to the Caribbean Community flagship of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

He has been a force behind trying to get the necessary political and other support and action for ensuring that the institutional and other intrinsic arrangements for the CSME are put in place and working. I have memories of his efforts to ensure the viability and the effectiveness of the CSME Unit of the Secretariat when it was established in Barbados. I also have memories of meetings, his telephone calls and his exchanges with the Lead Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Advisory Council to the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee and his diplomatic persistence on what could work and what should be in place. What comes across in working with the Secretary General regarding giving effect to the CSME is his insistence on the appreciation of the importance of free movement of persons in the whole CSME schema. I am therefore fairly certain that one of his regrets would be that the Community has not yet come to agreement on the cluster of Contingent Rights that should accompany that free movement.

As a member of the agriculture fraternity in the Secretariat, it was so satisfying to see SG’s growing re-attachment to agriculture in the Region and his strong advocacy for the recognition of its importance for the Region’s development. One of his satisfactions must be the re-emergence of agriculture on the front burner of the CARICOM Agenda.

As I look back over the years and as I often was moved to observe, I am not sure that the Secretary General had not found the secret to a 25 hour day. The time of the day or the day of the week made no difference to what had to be done and he led from way in front. It would be impossible to calculate or understand the amount of time, mental, physical and other energy that he has dedicated to CARICOM matters.
Within the Secretariat, as a senior member of staff, from the many discussions with the SG and the lengthy interchanges, you just knew when to leave some matters alone. Not surprisingly, he held to his views but also he was caring about the welfare of his staff and went the extra mile to that end. But, as Secretary-General Carrington formally leaves the Secretariat, if nothing else, I think whenever we think of ICT and the Secretariat, we remember among other things, the Secretary-General’s view of effectiveness in communicating with Member States and his maxim – sending is not receiving – and that therefore there is always the need to check that what has been sent has in fact been received.

resulting in the establishment of Joint Commissions or similar arrangements with now thirteen from a figure of two (Mexico and Canada) and accreditation of high level representatives from twenty-two third countries or groupings. Where there were challenges such as forming a regional arrangement with Cuba at a time when not all CARICOM countries held diplomatic relations with that country, he used his skills as a diplomat, a negotiator and a visionary to impress on all Member States the wisdom of forging such a relationship. The Secretary-General showed fortitude in taking the formation of the Association of Caribbean States, a recommendation from the West Indian Commission, from idea to reality in four short months. In this he tarried relentlessly and without a budget to support its creation, nor the firm language skills to support negotiation among twenty-five states speaking at least four languages.

Such was the vision and fortitude of SG.

Today, the Community can be satisfied that the relations forged with neighbouring and far-flung states have provided much of the technical assistance which supports so many of our regional programmes not including the traditional support provided within the EU/CARIFORUM Relationship.

On a more personal note, I can vouch that the Secretary-General always welcomed the input of his more junior staff often recounting that he was the beneficiary of such useful discourse with William Demas. I was therefore encouraged to express my opinion, and was not hesitant in doing so fully recognising and respecting that these would not necessarily be shared by the SG.

It is therefore without hesitation that I declare on his departure - WELL DONE SG, we salute you.

In my over thirty years of knowing and interacting with “Carrie” or “SG”, as he is addressed depending on the era in which one came into contact with him, one constant has been his unstinting and indefatigable commitment to the Caribbean Community. In every sphere of his professional life he has always placed the interests of CARICOM at the forefront of his endeavours. It has been my privilege to have served with him in each of the arenas in which he has worked outside of his homeland and have no hesitation in stating that his has been a career of uninterrupted distinction.

Over the years Karen and I and our children have shared and enjoyed the closest of friendship with SG. We still fondly recall his annual visits in Brussels just before midnight on 24th December to deliver Christmas gifts to our boys, who absolutely delighted in the ritual. By now, his penchant for remembering dates and telephone numbers is well recognized. Equally impressive was how readily he processed and stored our new numbers
when we changed residence. He took special pride in this attribute. As he closes this chapter of his distinguished career, Karen and I join with the rest of our colleagues in applauding and thanking him for his leadership for which he has been appropriately recognised. 

Walk good Sir Edwin. 

“He has always seen the bigger picture”

![Photo of Mr. Timothy Odle]

Mr. Timothy Odle
Deputy Programme Manager, Services, CARICOM Secretariat

I first met Secretary General Carrington in 1993 when I attended the Forty-Fourth Meeting of the Common Market Council as Barbados’ delegate.

SG Carrington had only taken up office a few months earlier and there was talk that he was the “new kid on the block”. If my memory serves me well, I think that it was his first meeting as Secretary General of the Community with the members of the Council.

The Chairman of the Meeting, the now deceased Shree Chan of Guyana, commended the SG for batting very well during that meeting.

Our paths have been consistently co-planar since 1996 when I joined the Secretariat. The SG has been many things to me: mentor, brother, father, friend, and comforter. I have dealt with him in many capacities and I will focus on two.

I worked with him as President of the Staff Association. SG Carrington loves his staff. He sees and treats them as part of his biological family. Anyone can approach him. Anyone can seek facilitation or help. I remember we had a staff meeting to discuss salary increases/adjustments. I was prepared to mobilize staff to strike. SG simply counseled me to “hold my gun powder”. You see, he saw the bigger picture. He has always seen the bigger picture. That is why he has successfully led the Region for eighteen years.

He also has a lighter side. I once went to the SG to inform him that the Association was planning an activity to raise funds, and solicited a donation from him. He jokingly remarked: “Baje me ‘fraid the scandal that the money thief”’. I jokingly responded: “SG at least I would not thief yours”. We both had a good laugh.

Finally, I have had very few regrets with respect to my years of encounter with SG Carrington. The greatest one is that I did not spend at least five minutes a week to bask in the wealth of his experience. It is not that we did not try. Every time we met it was refreshing.

SG I can boldly say without fear of contradiction: You have fought a good fight for the Region, and its people - past, present and future. You were definitely one of the blocks cut out to fit into the integration edifice. You have sown precious and enduring seed. May GOD bless you and your family.
In the annals of the Caribbean Community and its Secretariat, the legacy of Sir Edwin Carrington will be deeply etched. Fondly referred to as SG, his 18 years between 1992 and 2010 distinguishes him as the longest serving Secretary-General to date. And what eventful years they were?

Sir Edwin has had the distinction of guiding the Secretariat, the engine of the integration movement, through its most critical evolutionary period. The establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and the Caribbean Court of Justice are among the most significant achievements attained under his watch. The widening arch of integration to include CARIFORUM, the ACS, the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV & AIDS are but few examples of the landmarks that emerged as he charted the course of integration.

In this way, SG is justified in reflecting on his success in keeping the CARICOM system relevant to the objectives and goals of the integration process.

His was, no doubt, a task confronted by myriad challenges. Yet he was able to overcome the obstacles by a demonstration of commitment and faith in the regional mission. The many awards from governments and institutions throughout the region and beyond are testimony to the respect and appreciation for his valuable contribution and commitment to the Region.

As a leader he was focused and purposeful. As a “boss”, he was accessible and approachable. Indeed, he touched the lives of each member of the Secretariat in one way or another. I have no doubt that his retirement is well earned and I wish him the very best.

It is a great honour for me to be working with the Secretary-General, Sir Edwin Carrington, for the last three years of his tenure. For me, working with the Secretary-General has been the greatest learning experience and the peak of my career. His dedication and commitment to the Community is commendable. To work as part of the team in the Office of the Secretary-General is an incomparable experience indeed.

It is my pleasure to have been associated with the Most Illustrious Sir Edwin Carrington. It is good to know that even though he is leaving the Secretariat he is not leaving the Community.

Let me take this opportunity in wishing Sir Edwin, an enjoyable and well-deserved retirement.
In January 1999, I was assigned to the Office of the Secretary-General for three weeks, to assist in preparations for the scheduled Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government, which was being convened in Suriname that February. My three week assignment lasted for three years. Those years proved to be challenging, sometimes frenetic, always educational and -- for the most part -- enjoyable.

Working with S-G Carrington was a pleasure, since he anticipated that his staff would approach their duties with the same focus and dedication that he himself possessed. He was also approachable in that one could ask, and would get responses to questions raised or clarification sought. He never overtly demanded it, but the knowledge that there were deadlines to be met, crises to be averted or to be confronted, and schedules to be juggled or finessed, pressed one to strive to ensure that S-G was briefed as fully as possible and armed with his schedule and the documents he needed for his myriad meetings and missions. I sometimes accompanied him, always travelling with a spare set of documents in case he could not immediately lay his hands on a document he required at a specific time. There were also occasions where I would receive a call from the S-G and have to immediately make arrangements for travel.

While I was no stranger to long hours at work, in the S-G’s office, the habit of working for long hours and on weekends and public holidays became engrained, so much so that anyone leaving earlier than usual (including the S-G) would be teased that he or she might suffer from sunburn. One of my memories is of a very hectic period, when S-G was due to arrive in Guyana on the evening of Holy Thursday and scheduled to leave for a major meeting in Brazil on the morning following Easter Monday. He called on Holy Thursday morning to ask where we were with our preparations for his mission and whether the staff would be in office on Good Friday.

I responded that our staff were good Christians and were not planning to work on that day. S-G promptly asked me, “So which church are you going to?” I replied that I usually worshipped in the wide open spaces. We laughed and S-G said, “So I’ll see you on Saturday?” I assured him that I had briefed the staff and we all planned to be in the office on Saturday. We worked that Saturday, a bit of Sunday and up to midday on Easter Monday, to ensure that S-G would leave for his meeting as fully prepared as possible.

We learnt that S-G constantly revised his speeches and presentations and that they could only be considered ‘final’ when they had actually been delivered. I remember being in the midst of seasoning my meats at home one Christmas Eve day, when S-G called from Trinidad to tell me he wanted to make some changes to a paragraph in his year end message, but he was worried because the Secretariat had already closed for the holidays and he couldn’t locate either of his secretaries. I assured the S-G that we had all taken home an electronic copy of his message in the event that he might call to edit it, and that I would power up my computer and call him back. I got three other calls with ‘minor amendments’, the last being late that afternoon from Mr. Blake, to whom the S-G had been speaking and who had been asked to pass on additional changes.

Work aside, I found S-G Carrington to be deeply concerned about the well-being of his staff and of people in general. He was sympathetic when he learnt of a crisis in a staff member’s life and wanted to know what he could do to help. In those days, he tried to meet with any staff member who asked for a meeting with him, whether it was to discuss personal or professional matters. This extended to perfect strangers who would call requesting his assistance.

One example of his caring that I can recall is his response to an appeal he received from a Guyanese mother whose son, who had recently undergone surgery, had been stranded in Grand Cayman after the devastation of Hurricane Mitch. The S-G asked me to follow up on this matter for him. After messages to Grand Cayman and calls to Jamaica had been made to ensure that the gentleman could get a flight home, the S-G’s concern did not cease until he learnt the morning after his scheduled return, that the young man had been restored to his mother and that he had left to go to the barber.

Humour often leavened the frenetic pace at which we worked, so that there was gentle teasing and joking. A quiet comment from the S-G would alert us to the fact that he also found entertainment in some of the situations in which we found ourselves. Of course, many of these have to remain in house.

All in all, I can say that working closely with S-G Carrington provided me and inspired me with an understanding of his dedication and commitment to the Region and its people, and of a person who never forgot his roots and the values he inculcated in the village of Parlatuvier, Tobago.
My relationship with Edwin Carrington goes back to 1963 when I returned to the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica, after a two-year stint in France. Carrie, as he was affectionately called, was also in his final year, having entered the institution in 1961. We both lived in Irvine Hall, he in Block D, a male block and I in Block A, one of the female blocks. I was immediately impressed by his agility of mind and his obvious leadership qualities, not to mention his wry sense of humour. I asked one of my colleagues who was that guy and I was told that he was one of the bright sparks in the Economics programme from whom great things were expected. It was not surprising that he was President of the Economics Society. Nor was it surprising that he obtained an Upper Second Class Honours Degree and won a UWI post graduate scholarship.

But Carrie was not only brains. He was also active on the playing field, playing both cricket and football. To this day, he boasts about the contribution that he made to the winning goal in a match against the hitherto unbeaten Chancellor Hall. I still recall being on the sideline, rooting for Irvine and chanting the refrain “Irvine Hall, Irvine Hall, Irvine Hall plays better football.”

My next encounter with him was in Canada where he had gone to McGill University to continue post-graduate studies and I was at the University of Toronto. We communicated on the telephone and I remember going to Montreal to EXPO where I met the family. Friends in Montreal kept me abreast of the contribution he was making to the academic community.

I returned home in 1970 and not long after Carrie and family moved to Georgetown where he had accepted a post as Chief of Economics at the CARICOM Secretariat. As fate would have it, he moved in to a house in Section M, Campbellville, in a house obliquely opposite to ours. A vibrant relationship developed between our two families, especially between my son Garth and Jerry.

That friendship lasted until Jerry’s early demise.

We also did a fair share of partying, either in Section M or in Enachu Street in Section K, which was the Carringtons second home or at Sheila Chan’s House on Eping Avenue, Bel Air Park or at Colgrain House at fetes hosted by Willie Demas or Alistair McIntyre. It is a shame that that tradition of partying and liming is no longer as strong.

Then the Carrington’s moved to Brussels. Whenever Carrie came to Georgetown, he always came around and on a number of occasions he actually stayed with us. One summer, the girls and I spent a wonderful week in Brussels and were recipients of the Carrington hospitality.

It is amazing how many quality memories can be accumulated in forty-seven years. I constantly mull over them with great nostalgia. Working for the Secretary-General has been a learning experience and my professional admiration of him enhances the bonds of our friendship.

I wish him a happy and rewarding retirement which he so richly deserves.

“A stickler for time”
- Ms. Phyllis French

Even though Dr. Edwin Carrington, who I fondly refer to as SG, was focused on the overall cause of regional integration, he was equally concerned with the details of running the Office of the Secretary-General where I served as his secretary for a total of 12 years.

A stickler for time, SG was always at his desk very early each day in readiness for a 12 hour plus work day. Reporting for duty at 8:30 instead of for 8:30 hrs would cause his ire (notwithstanding the secretary’s day would sometimes exceed 12 hours!). On occasion he would even observe late comers from his office window as if it were a hobby.

The quality of the services provided by his Office was especially important to the SG. Strenuous efforts had to be taken to ensure that documents were prepared to perfection. There could be absolutely no error in sending the document to the intended recipient. He always insisted that “sending is not receiving” and we had to double check confirmation of receipt.

Even with routine tasks such as answering the telephone there could be no room for mediocrity. One could never tell when it was he at the end of the line, or as he would say, ‘that could have been a Head of Government’. On a personal note, SG was a generous man. He insisted on meeting with people from all walks of life – giving a willing ear, hand or shoulder. He consistently contributed to numerous varied causes which were never trumpeted or advertised. He inspired me.

His high expectations made me
set high standards for myself and ultimately led me to further my studies at the University of Guyana. I learnt a lot from him. SG even loved to share his lunch and could never refuse the opportunity to share in food prepared to the highest quality by the Colgrain House staff.

There were also numerous invitations for lunch and dinner at Colgrain House on festive occasions.

Over the twelve years that I worked for Dr. Carrington in the Office of the Secretary-General I felt so safe and comfortable under his leadership.

I knew it would be quite an adjustment to work elsewhere and when I finally moved out of the office, it was only then I realised how lucky I had been to have worked with SG.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with him.
The late Prime Minister of Barbados, the Hon. David Thompson.

A lawyer by profession, he was the third sitting prime minister of Barbados to die in office.

The Hon. David Thompson, Prime Minister of Barbados succumbed to pancreatic cancer on 23 October 2010 at his private residence in Mapps, St. Phillip, Barbados. His wife Mara, and daughters Mischa, Oya and Osa-Marie, were at his bedside when he died.

On 14 May, at a media briefing, Prime Minister Thompson announced he was not enjoying the best of health. He had been suffering from stomach pains since March and had undergone tests in Barbados which were inconclusive. He travelled to the United States for further medical intervention and subsequently handed over Prime Ministerial duties to Attorney-General and Deputy Prime Minister Freundel Stuart.

Prime Minister Thompson, 48, served just under three years as Head of Government of Barbados. In that short span, however, he made a lasting impression on and meaningful contribution to the Community, having served as lead Head of Government with responsibility for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) in the CARICOM Quasi Cabinet.

He was buried on 3 November 2010 after an official period of mourning that began on 23 October 2010.

The following are some of the tributes made on his passing:

“We in Jamaica are deeply saddened by the passing of Barbadian Prime Minister, the Honourable David Thompson. It is a great loss not only to the people of Barbados but, indeed, the entire Caribbean.

While we were painfully aware of the severity of his illness, we never gave up hope for his recovery. Now, he has left us and we join with his family, the government and people of Barbados in mourning his death.

Prime Minister Thompson was in office for less than three years but in that short space of time he had stamped his leadership on Barbados and established himself as a strong and forceful leader within the region, fiercely committed to the development of Barbados, but just as passionately committed to regional development.

I valued highly the solid, collaborative relationship he and I enjoyed as we worked together in our respective lead roles within CARICOM on external trade negotiations and the development of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

The Caribbean has lost at the young age of 48 one of its most vibrant leaders, the promise which he offered and the hope that he instilled.

On behalf of the government and people of Jamaica, I offer our heartfelt condolences to his widow, Mara, their three daughters and the other members of his family. Over these past several months, they have endured many anxious moments and must now come to grips with the reality of his passing. We assure them of the prayerful support of the Jamaican people at this difficult time.

We offer our good wishes and support, also, to Prime Minister Freundel Stuart who now takes up the mantle to fulfill the mission that David left behind”. Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Hon Bruce Golding.
"It is with great sadness I learned this morning of the passing of Prime Minister David Thompson. On behalf of the government and people of Grenada I express condolences to his family, his Cabinet, and the government and people of Barbados.

Prime Minister Thompson was a friend, a Caribbean visionary and a leader whose wisdom was beyond his years.

His leadership in building and deepening the relationship with the OECS and at the wider CARICOM level will be greatly missed. He understood the need for us to work together to build a Caribbean identity.

Prime Minister Thompson was the first Prime Minister to visit Grenada following my party’s victory at the polls in July 2008.

He will be remembered for his soft-spoken but firm leadership, determination and perseverance to work towards an improved quality of life for the people of Barbados and the people of this region.

As part of the Caribbean nation, Grenada mourns with the people of Barbados on the news of the passing of a truly wonderful person and one of Barbados’ great sons”. Prime Minister of Grenada, the Hon Tillman Thomas.

“We had all been generally aware of the serious nature of his affliction with pancreatic cancer but had been hoping and praying that somehow he would have overcome this challenge. Well it was not to be and we are all deeply saddened by his passing.

His short term as Prime Minister of Barbados and thus Member of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community did not afford him the opportunity and scope to make the full contribution his talents promised to bring to the integration process at that level.

Prime Minister Thompson’s deliberate, evidence-based approach to issues and the search for their resolution, while not always popular, sought to provide a well-grounded basis for decision making.

His calm, deliberate manner also served to facilitate the discussions of the most delicate and difficult matters at the highest level. Those said qualities endeared him to most of us.”

To his wife Mara, his daughters and other members of his family and to the Government and people of Barbados, we join in mourning the loss of this outstanding Caribbean son of the soil”. Secretary-General Carrington.

“It is with deep sadness that I learned of the passing of Hon. David Thompson, Prime Minister of Barbados this morning (Saturday, October 23). Despite the gravity of the prognosis, one could not help hoping that eventually, he would win the valiant struggle that he waged against the cancer that had invaded his life. Sadly, this was not to be.

We have lost a fine Caribbean leader, a patriot who, throughout his life, demonstrated a passionate interest in the politics of his country, which he identified as an important vehicle for national and regional development. It was no mean achievement to have become the leader of his Party and Prime Minister at such a relatively young age. However, this was not surprising to those who were exposed to his commitment, affability, fine mind and analytical skills.

I remember that we had an excellent relationship when we interacted at the ministerial level when we were both Ministers of Finance for our respective countries in the early 1990s. I recall being very impressed with his grasp of issues and depth of knowledge.

The Region is the poorer for the early departure of one who was so well equipped to continue making a significant contribution to refiguring the contours of CARICOM to meet the challenges of a world in the process of rapid transition.

I extend condolences to his wife Mara, children, other family members and the people of Barbados and pray that all may be strengthened and comforted during this time of mourning”. P. J. Patterson ON, OCC, PC, QC.
"The CARICOM Youth Ambassador Corps is profoundly saddened by the passing of the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable David Thompson.

In his personal and professional life, Mr. Thompson proved himself to be a champion of youth issues and played an integral role in forming several associations that inherently seek to promote positive youth development. His role in The Youth in Business Programme as well as the Barbados Youth Service is testament to this dedication.

"I was deeply sorry to learn of the passing of David Thompson. While I knew he was gravely ill, the news of his death was still hurtful".

The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party leader said: "David Thompson was a good personal friend of many years standing. It is a matter of great regret to me that after the years of working so diligently for the Prime Ministership, he was not able to fulfill his potential as an outstanding head of government of Barbados and as a Caribbean leader".

"The close Relations between the Democratic Labour Party of Barbados and the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party go back many years to Errol Barrow and V C Bird Snr.

Indeed, in a National address in March this year, Prime Minister Thompson again reiterated his passion to serve youth as he insightfully developed new strategies to push forward his Youth Agenda - a promise he made in 2008 to tackle and resolve issues of concern to young people.

The Caribbean Community has lost a great public servant.

We would like to offer sincere condolences to the Thompson family and to the Government and people of Barbados". CARICOM Youth Ambassadors

At this moment of mourning and grief that the Democratic Labour Party is experiencing, I extend the deepest sympathy and fraternal support of the Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party".

"On behalf of my family and myself, I extend sincere condolences to David Thompson’s entire family and pray God’s blessings and guidance for them”.

"The Antigua and Barbuda Labour Party and all its members, supporters and friends also extend to all the people of Barbados our sorrow at this tragic moment of their history and we assure them of our support for them as they mourn their young leader”. The Hon Lester Bird, Opposition Leader, Antigua and Barbuda.
Community poorer for the loss of a distinguished leader

TRIBUTE BY
HON. BRUCE GOLDING, PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA
AND CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY,
TO THE HON. DAVID THOMPSON, LATE PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS
3 November 2010

Ever since we became aware of David’s illness, we hoped and prayed that this day would not come – not now, not so soon.

The entire Caribbean Community has been left much poorer for the loss of one of its distinguished leaders.

We restrain ourselves from asking why, for we dare not question God’s will. Still, we are deeply grieved that someone with so much promise, someone who represented so much hope, should have been taken from us so soon.

Those of us who have followed David’s career – his election to Parliament at the tender age of 25, his service as a Member of Parliament and Minister of Government over more than 20 years, the dignity with which he rode the waves of political triumphs and disappointments, his emergence as Prime Minister of Barbados and the courage and serenity with which he faced his own death – all recognize that this was no ordinary man.

David assumed the leadership of Barbados at a time of great challenge, a time when the world was entering the worst economic crisis of our lifetime. It has had a severe effect on Barbados as, indeed, all the countries of the region and, like others of us who came to office around the same time, he swam against the currents to preserve the commitments he had made to the Barbadian people which formed the mandate he had been given. In the face of these difficulties, David led Barbados with a clear mind and steady hands.

He made a significant impact in the short space of time that he worked with us among Caribbean Heads of Government. He brought a sharp, refreshing and engaging perspective to issues affecting CARICOM. He was a realist and a pragmatist, qualities that so often misrepresented his commitment to regionalism – for he was passionately a Caribbean man dedicated to regional development and the attainment of prosperity throughout the region.

As we worked together – he as the lead Prime Minister on the implementation of our flagship programme, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, and I with responsibility for external trade negotiations – I developed great admiration for his clarity of thought and his profound understanding of the issues affecting Caribbean development. He was a man who could always be taken at his word – he said what he meant and meant what he said.

All of us, CARICOM leaders, will miss his wise counsel, his timely and effective interventions, his calmness even in contentious debates and that frankness that was so often tempered with his inimitable dry humour.

Today, we bid him farewell and, even though we mourn his passing, we celebrate his life and give thanks that he honoured us by sharing so much of that life with us, giving so much of that life to us. Abraham Lincoln said it well:

“Die when I may, I want it said of me by those who knew me best that I always plucked a thistle and planned a flower where I thought a flower would grow.”

On behalf of my colleague Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, I extend to Mara, their three lovely daughters and the other members of his family not only our heartfelt condolences but our love and prayerful support at this time. We know that over these past several months you have had to endure many anxious moments when you fought to keep hope alive in the face of despair. We know that after the ceremonies have ended and the glowing tributes have been paid, after we have all returned to our separate routines, you will have to come to grips with the reality that someone who was so important a part of your lives, someone whom you loved as much as he loved you, is no longer with you. We will continue to pray for you and ask God to place his powerful, comforting arms around you to ease the pain and fill the emptiness that is in your hearts. But even as you grieve, I ask that you take heart and be uplifted in the knowledge that your husband, your father, your family member was a good man who meant and did well, who touched so many lives, who inspired the hearts of so many people and who will never be forgotten.

To the government and people of Barbados we offer, as well, our profound sympathies and our support as you continue the work that he had started and pursue the dreams that he had shared with you.

As we pay our last respects and take David to his final resting place, we recall the words of John Donne:

“When one man dies, a chapter is not torn out of the book; it is merely translated into a better language.”

John Donne also wrote:

“Death be not proud, though some have called thee mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so.
For, those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow die not, poor death,
Nor yet canst thou kill me.”

Death cannot kill David Thompson for he will live in our hearts for as long as life shall last.