GRENADA’S PRIME MINISTER CALLS FOR GREATER COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH AND CARICOM

ST.GEORGE’S, GRENADA, FEBRUARY 16th, 2011 – Prime Minister Tillman Thomas has called on the 12 member Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the 54 member Commonwealth to “join forces and form strategic alliances” to pursue the developmental interests of their members.

Speaking in Jamaica, at a conference hosted by the University of the West Indies and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Prime Minister, who also chairs CARICOM, said, there is a “great need” for cooperation among developing countries in seeking to reform the global financial institutions.

“The onerous conditions imposed for the use of their facilities allied to the rules applied for graduation, pose serious challenges to our hopes for development. Burdened by debt and unable to obtain concessionary loans, we are literally between a rock and a hard place,” the Grenadian leader said.

The CARICOM Chairman told the Jamaica Conference, which has as its theme “CARICOM and the Commonwealth: Collective Responsibility in the 21st Century”, that the links which exist among Commonwealth States must be used more aggressively to advance the interests of small under-developed states.

He called on developed economies to recognise the adverse effects of some of their recovery policies on the small economies, as there are already “signs of marginalisation” of small states in the pursuit of global economic recovery.

“I therefore call on the international community to play a greater role in assisting our economies through financial and technical assistance,” the Prime Minister said, pointing to the efforts of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and CARICOM to further integrate their economies and explore ways of championing their own development.

The Prime Minister, who also chairs the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), continued to make a case for assistance for small island states in reducing and mitigating against the threats posed to the survival of these states from climate change.

For more information contact: PRESS SECRETARY - Richard Simon
“All our diligent efforts to develop our nations can be rendered meaningless unless urgent and effective measures are taken to address the adverse effects of climate change. For a number of our countries, sea-level rise in particular, presents a clear and present danger to their very existence,” he told the conference.

In the absence from the state of the Hon. Tillman Thomas, Finance Minister Hon. Nazim Burke has been appointed to act in the Office of Prime Minister.

-30-