

**STATEMENT ISSUED AT THE END OF THE  
JOINT MEETING OF  
CARICOM YOUTH AMBASSADORS AND DIRECTORS OF YOUTH AFFAIRS  
30 NOVEMBER 2009 - 2 DECEMBER 2009  
PARAMARIBO, SURINAME**

The Joint Inter-Agency Meeting of CARICOM Youth Ambassadors (CYA) and Directors of Youth Affairs (DYA) was convened in Paramaribo, Suriname from 30 November 2009 to 2 December 2009 to orient seventeen new Ambassadors to evaluate and develop strategies for the sustainability of the CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme

The Meeting acknowledged the significant role of the Youth Ambassador in deepening levels of youth partnership and participation in the regional integration and development processes and in equipping a cadre of exceptional young persons with leadership skills to promote regional integration and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

The Meeting also acknowledged the critical support given by the Caribbean Community over the years in advancing the youth agenda, noting the most recent initiative of the establishment of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD) to provide a full scale analysis of the situation of youth in the Caribbean and recommend appropriate policies to improve the well-being of Caribbean youth.

The Meeting further recognised the need for continued strengthening of the Youth Ambassador corps and endorsed the findings of the CYA 2007 Evaluation which required greater commitment from Youth Ambassadors and stronger partnerships and support to sustain the programme.

Against this background the Joint Meeting outlined the following recommendations for the consideration of Governments and the Caribbean Community:

Recognising the importance of capacity building in sustaining the Youth Ambassador Programme, the Joint Meeting is calling upon Caribbean Community Heads of Government to -

1. Facilitate the development and implementation of a CYA training and orientation module by Governments through their Youth Departments to provide training and orientation of incoming CYAs prior to the commencement of their term, including under-studying outgoing CYAs.
2. Mandate the CARICOM Secretariat to convene at least three regional CYA meetings annually: The First to induct and train Youth Ambassadors; the second to undertake a Mid-Year Comprehensive Reporting from the Ambassadors and the third to provide a comprehensive review and evaluation of the Youth Ambassador Programme.
3. Support the establishment of a Youth Advisory Council to assist in advancing the youth agenda; enhance the decision-making capacity of the CYAP; ensure greater recognition of the programme and allow for a more permanent representation of youth at the Meetings of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) and other related Fora.
4. Endorse the call for national Governments to promote partnerships with national, regional and international agencies for training, strategic collaborations on projects and activities and to provide more effective youth interventions and linkages.

5. Promote and provide assistance to Member States in strengthening youth networks at the national and regional level.

Acknowledging the critical importance of active and tangible support from Caribbean Governments, the Joint Meeting is calling upon national governments to consider the following recommendations -

1. Provide suitable fora and appropriate incentives to encourage the Private Sector to give more active support to youth programmes.
2. Support National Plans of Action for CYA through annual budgetary allocations to carefully scrutinised work plans submitted by Youth Ambassadors.
3. Institute youth exchange programmes to showcase best practices and promote appreciation of Caribbean cultural diversity.
4. Promote volunteerism by encouraging community ownership and national pride through the CYAP and other youth networks.
5. Create opportunities for Youth Ambassadors to participate in community programmes and other national developmental initiatives to raise the profile and increase visibility of CYAs at the community level.