CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)

AND

CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM (SICA)

PLAN OF ACTION
CARICOM-SICA PLAN OF ACTION

The Secretaries-General of the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), hereinafter referred to as "The Parties", gathered here in Belize City, Belize, on the 22nd of February of 2007, and in accordance with the mandate of the 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government of SICA, CARICOM and the Dominican Republic held in Belize City, Belize, hereby agree to adopt the following Plan of Action:

1. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

   a. The Parties agree to exchange strategies for the development of integrated approaches to Human Resource Development, to include, inter alia, education, cultural development and youth development. The Parties agree to promote private sector participation in strengthening human resource development in the sub-regions. The Parties agree to determine specific areas in which they will share knowledge and experiences. In particular, the Parties agree to exchange information on the availability of scholarship opportunities and the establishment of links between universities and to secure the funding for scholarships as well as exchange programmes for students and professors, and academic research within the sub-regions.

   b. The Parties, through their respective Secretariats, agree to explore the possibility of convening in 2007, the "First Central American – Caribbean Ministerial Conference on Education and Culture."

2. HEALTH

   a. The Parties agree to exchange strategies on the "Development and Financing" for the Health Sector to provide adequate and affordable health care, targeting the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

   b. The Parties agree to exchange expertise and build partnerships to develop and implement effective public awareness and prevention strategies, treatment, care and support for the chronic non-communicable diseases and HIV and AIDS programmes, including joint arrangements for the purchase of medications.
c. The Parties agree to establish links among specialized hospitals to exchange experiences, transfer technology and develop cooperation programmes within the sub-regions.

d. The Parties agree to collaborate on matters related to health with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

3. **HOUSING**

   a. The Parties agree to exchange information and expertise on the construction of low income housing, and modern and standardized building codes, particularly those pertaining to hurricane, earthquake, flood, and fire resistance.

   b. The Parties agree, through the Secretariats of SICA and CARICOM, to explore the possibility of convening a technical meeting in 2007 with the aim of establishing a programme of cooperation.

4. **POVERTY ERADICATION**

   a. The Parties agree to exchange information on Poverty Eradication Strategies adopted by Member States.

   b. The Parties agree for the SICA and CARICOM Secretariats with the support of UN-ECLAC, to coordinate the preparation of a joint report on the similarities in the sub-regions on increase in poverty, with the aim of presenting such report to multilateral organizations to obtain advice and support for programmes to alleviate this problem.

5. **ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL DISASTERS**

   a. The Parties agree to seek to identify cooperation initiatives within the framework of the February 2002 Meeting of Officials responsible for the Environment. Likewise, the Parties agree to seek to coordinate policies and legislation with the aim of providing a greater level of environmental protection to the Caribbean Sea, and to coordinate positions on the sustainable use of the marine and coastal resources within the framework of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), towards the development of
a management framework for the Caribbean Sea, particularly through institutional capacity building.

b. The Parties agree to develop the required human and institutional capacities to adequately respond to the vulnerability to natural disasters faced by CARICOM and SICA member countries. The Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and the Centro para la Prevención de Desastres Naturales de América Central (CEPREDENAC) will develop a closer working relationship and present viable proposals for sustainable and effective ways to better manage the risks associated with natural disasters and to build resilience particularly for small island developing states in the areas of early warning, prevention, recovery and mitigation. The Parties will work to achieve this objective prior to the Second CARICOM – SICA Summit of Heads of State and Government.

c. The Parties agree to provide support to the efforts of the two sub-regions to implement adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change to protect the fragile ecosystems and economies from the possible effects of climate change.

d. The Parties agree to cooperate and to exchange information on the transfer of relevant technologies, share best practices and expertise, encourage the increased use of renewable resources of energy and clean fossil fuels, and improve efficiency in energy use in production, distribution and consumption.

e. The Parties agree to collaborate to take advantage of the Latin American and the Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development launched in Johannesburg in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and in particular, on the need for the open and transparent development of indicators as the medium to assist Member States in monitoring progress made towards attaining the goals of said Initiative.

f. The Parties agree to continue to urge that the issue of natural disasters be recognised as a global issue and in this context, welcome the establishment of the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) which is intended to provide a predictable and timely response to the emergencies and humanitarian crises associated with natural disasters. They commend those countries which have made a contribution to the CERF and call on those countries in a position to do so to make voluntary pledges to the Fund.
6. FOREIGN POLICY COORDINATION

a. The Parties agree to promote when necessary, consultations to ensure a coordinated approach in the Summit of the Americas and EU-LAC processes. To this end, an exchange of views should be considered prior to the meetings of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) and the preparatory meetings for the EU-LAC Summit as well as by the two sub-regional Secretariats on an ongoing basis with respect to issues in those processes of critical importance to one or both sub-regions. The Parties should ensure that the issue of smaller economies remains an integral part of these processes.

b. The Parties agree to encourage Member States to actively pursue Visa Waiver Agreements between Member States of CARICOM and of SICA for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports. The Parties also agree to make recommendations for promoting and facilitating the flow of tourists and visitors between the two sub-regions.

c. The Parties agree that Ministers of Foreign Affairs will instruct their Representatives at the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Association of Caribbean States and at regional and international fora, to engage in consultations on issues of critical interest to the sub-regions as well as on candidatures with the aim of providing mutual support. They agree that candidatures to be endorsed by CARICOM and SICA, whenever possible, be adopted by consensus and support for the most qualified candidate taking into consideration the principles of rotation, reciprocity, and gender equity.

7. TRADE AND INVESTMENT

a. The Parties agree to work closely and consult as necessary on issues related to multilateral trade. They agree to meet at Ministerial level in Belize in the first half of 2007 to consider matters of interest to both sub-regions in their international trade relations.

b. The Parties agree to explore the possibility of negotiating Double Taxation and Bilateral Investment Agreements.

c. The Parties agree to encourage the relevant authorities to consider the possibility of waiving visa requirements for bona fide business travellers.
d. The Parties agree that the CARICOM and SICA Ministers of Trade as well as their officials will meet to explore opportunities for the promotion of trade in goods and services between the two sub-regions. They shall use the opportunities presented by ACS Trade Ministerial or technical meetings to do so.

8. CRIME AND SECURITY

a. The Parties agree that the Ministers of Public Security and Home Affairs will agree to meet to discuss the feasibility of establishing a mechanism for the sharing of information for the most effective use of resources, particularly in combating transnational criminal activity, including drug trafficking.

b. The Parties agree to condemn acts of terrorism, in whatever form they are manifested and to coordinate actions to prevent and counter such acts and related crime.

9. ANTI-CORRUPTION

The Parties agree to encourage Member States of CARICOM and of SICA to sign and ratify all international instruments related to the fight against corruption at the national, regional and international levels.

10. AIR TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

a. The Parties agree to cooperate in the areas of air transportation and tourism including within the framework of the ACS Special Committee on Transport and Sustainable Tourism.

b. The Parties agree to maintain communication and cooperation between the Directorates of Civil Aviation of CARICOM and the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA).

c. The Parties agree to instruct the CARICOM and SICA Secretariats, and to request the ACS Secretariat as required, to support the efforts in strengthening bi-regional relations in the areas of tourism and air transportation.
11. CULTURAL EXCHANGES

a. The Parties agree to promote and participate in the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) as the premier cultural event among the countries of the Caribbean Community. CARIFESTA X will take place in The Bahamas in 2008.

b. The Parties agree to promote the development of the creative industries across the sub-regions. They agree to jointly request the financial assistance of external agencies in support of this objective.

12. FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM

a. The Parties agree to consider the possibility of convening Biennial Ordinary Summits, preceded by Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs on dates to be determined through diplomatic channels.

b. The High-level Technical Committee, established within the Framework Central America-CARICOM Cooperation Programme, which was adopted during the III Ministerial Conference between Central America and the Caribbean Community, held in San Jose, Costa Rica in November of 1996, will be responsible for follow-up and for recommending the necessary strategies for the implementation of this Plan of Action in consultation with the CARICOM and SICA Secretariats.
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized by their respective Organizations, have signed this Plan of Action.

DONE at Belize City, Belize, this 22nd day of February 2007, in English and Spanish languages, each text being equally authentic.

[Signatures]

ANIBAL QUINONEZ
Secretary General
Central American Integration System (SICA)

EDWIN W. CARRINGTON
Secretary-General
CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY