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**LDCS/SIDS TRUST FUND WORKSHOP FOR THE ASIA REGION:
ENGAGING WITH THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL DURING
AND AFTER COVID-19 THROUGH THE LDCS/SIDS TRUST FUND:
ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED” 24-25
NOVEMBER & 1 DECEMBER 2021**

STATEMENT BY

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THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Greetings to all! I am Ambassador A. Missouri Sherman-Peter, Permanent Observer of the Caribbean Community to the UN, New York.

It is a privilege to participate in this LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Workshop for the Asian Region, on behalf of the CARICOM Secretariat. I bring warm greetings on behalf of Dr. Carla Barnett, Caribbean Community Secretary-General to the Workshop's Host, the Government of the Republic of the Maldives, Officials of the Office of the United Nations High-Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Coordinator of the Trust Fund, and Workshop participants.

I was honoured to have been a Beneficiary of the Fund in 2016, at the first Universal Session of the Human Rights Council (HRC), and to have served as Rapporteur-General of the Caribbean Regional Workshop, the first in the series of four mandated by HRC Resolution 34/40. As such, I have also had the honour to participate in the two successive Workshops for the Pacific and Africa, and now the fourth, for Asia. These are among the experiences that have refined my knowledge of the remarkable evolution, progress, and achievements of the Trust Fund, an extraordinary mechanism.

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Commenting briefly on the Topic of this Workshop, “**Engaging with the UN Human Rights Council during and after COVID-19 through the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund: achievements, challenges and lessons learned**”, I would say that it is both well-timed, and insightful. With the support of the Fund, the voices of LDCs/SIDS have continued to be distinctly heard in the HRC, notwithstanding the Pandemic. This and other decisive achievements confirm that the Trust Fund has stood up to the challenges, and have learnt invaluable lessons therefrom, that will guide and advance its work post pandemic and continue to complement its earlier and ongoing initiatives.

Let me now share some of the Fund’s impressive Benchmarks, from a CARICOM perspective. Just 6 CARICOM LDCs/SIDS maintain Permanent Missions at the seat of the HRC in Geneva. Hearing the voices of all 14, however, became a reality in June 2017, when CARICOM became the first region to have received 100% support from the Trust Fund for participation in the HRC.

Of the 37 CARICOM Delegates that have been supported by the Fund, 26 were women and 11 were men, making the Fund a true “**Gender Champion**”.

The Trust Fund’s outstanding support of LDCs/SIDS has motivated our Region to contribute financially, if modestly, with one member state demonstrating its support for this well-organized and effective mechanism serving LDCs/SIDS globally. This is an opportune time, also, to express CARICOM’s deep appreciation to the Donors of the Trust Fund for their invaluable support.

CARICOM adopted The Georgetown Declaration Towards the Year 2022 at its Regional Workshop convened in Guyana in November 2018. The Declaration sets out courses of action for continued engagement between CARICOM and the OHCHR, through the Trust Fund and the HRC. The CARICOM Caucus Chair drew this fact to the attention of the UN General Assembly in introducing draft resolution A/73/347 entitled “Cooperation between the UN and Caribbean Community” on 16 September 2019.

The Chair also assured the General Assembly that CARICOM was looking forward to the operationalization of the courses of action set out in the Declaration to support its continued capacity building initiatives. CARICOM estimates that some 60% of its Declaration has now been implemented.

Since the adoption of the Declaration, the Region's engagement in the work of the HRC and its mechanism has markedly increased. Notably, The Bahamas has become the first CARICOM Member State to be elected to the HRC. The delivery of CARICOM Joint Statements to the HRC has been prioritized, with the Region delivering some ten (10) such statements over the past 4 years, including during a two-year period in which the world was engulfed in the COVID-19 pandemic.

CARICOM States highly appreciate the receipt of timely information on the work of the HRC, to which the Fund contributes through its regular briefing of our Caucus in New York. Our New York Caucus and Regional Group in Geneva looks forward to engagement with the Trust Fund in December 2021, with a view to enhancing the link between the two United Nations Sites and relationship with the Trust Fund.

There are other prospects that may be, or are, being explored with the support of the Trust Fund, moving forward from this fourth and final Trust Fund Asian Regional Workshop, and towards the Tenth Anniversary of the Trust Fund. For instance:

- ❖ At the request of Member States, training might be organized by the Fund at the national level;
- ❖ Consideration might be given to providing Trust Fund support to beneficiary delegates attending a regular session of the HRC in Geneva to also participate in the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee during the consideration of Reports arising from the HRC as well as consultations on the corresponding resolutions, to gain the best understanding of the consideration of human rights issues between the HRC and General Assembly;
- ❖ Workshops might continue to be organized on Thematic issues, particularly those that impact LDCs/SIDS most such as Climate Change, and to which participants may be drawn from all regions.

CARICOM looks forward to the convening of the High-level Panel on Universality to be held at HRC 49, on the occasion of the Tenth anniversary of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund. Our Region being the first to have received 100% support from the Trust Fund, we hope that it will also be represented on, and actively participate in, the High-Level Panel.

There will be four (4) Declarations Towards the Year 2022 emanating from the Workshops of the Caribbean, Pacific, Africa, joined by the Declaration from Asia to be adopted by this Workshop. The decisions and proposals taken in these Declarations would no doubt provide invaluable information for reflection in the preparation of the Report to be presented by the OHCHR on the occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of the Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council.

I thank you.