CARICOM STATEMENT
BY
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Mr. President
Executive Director,
Ambassadors, Colleagues,

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of the fourteen member states of CARICOM, the group wishes to thank the Executive Director of UNOPS, Ms. Grete Faremo for presenting the annual report of the agency.

Amongst the various challenges facing developing countries and the impact to our sustained development, UNOPS is in a position to offer services that are both unique and unmatched to developing countries, this development assistance is not only important to countries in need but is also vital to all sister agencies.

UNOPS importance within the UN development system continues to grow, especially since the adoption of the resolution on UNDS reform. The CARICOM region enjoys a healthy relationship with UNOPS as being an agency of purpose and vision. From its innovation hub, to its sustainable housing platform; from its renewable electric projects to sustainable procurement practices, from its educational services to medical related services in our region, we continue to see an increased relationship with the agency, both in substance and delivery.

However, would still encourage UNOPS to offer other tailored services to us; the cost of doing business for us is far too high, efficiency of services, cost-savings and cost effectiveness continues to be challenges we face.

Mr. President, Madam Executive Director,

I mentioned the unique challenges facing CARICOM and Small Island Developing States, I didn’t make that statement without facts. The news of the devastation brought about by hurricane Dorian to our one of our own is somber. The Bahamas is one of the more developed CARICOM countries and the destruction brought to its shores will set it back decades.

Similarly, the extreme flooding that Barbados, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia experienced last year and the destruction of Barbuda and Dominica two years prior.
Let's not forget the earthquakes and hurricanes that also devastated Haiti in previous years. The prediction in the coming years gets worse, and I have not mentioned the devastation in the Pacific islands by natural disasters.

My question to the director, what are the plans in place to assist SIDS to deal with the effects of climate change, both pre and post natural disasters?

Despite the unfortunate circumstances of natural disasters, there is an opportunity for UNOPS to engage with our region on hurricane proofing and other international standards in weather related construction.

Our buildings were constructed to withstand category 3 storms, now we are being encouraged to build to withstand category 5, our resources are limited and our ability to build resiliently is also limited.

A partnership in this area is more than essential, it is important for our very survival. However, this partnership must be cost-effective, cost neutral and not profit based.

UNOPS partnership with SIDS must focus on sustainable project management, sustainable infrastructure construction and sustainable procurement. These three areas can assist us in realizing the intended ambitions of the 2030 agenda, achieving the SDGs and the Samoa pathway.

The High-level Meeting on the Samoa Pathway is a mere week away, I recall UNOPS engagement in past SIDS meetings and I trust that the agency will participate in this High-Level Meeting at the highest possible level.

SIDS, at times appears to be back benched and it appears at other times that our issues are not given the heightened attention that is warranted. In order to hear our views and to understand our challenges, you must be seated at the table and be fully engaged.

In closing Mr. President, CARICOM remains committed to improving our working relationship with UNOPS and looks forward to a full engagement during this second regular session.

I Thank You.