STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)
BY H.E. DELANO F BART, QC, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SAINT
KITTS AND NEVIS TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIR OF CARICOM, AT
THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE SIXTY-
EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

9TH OCTOBER, 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are members of the United Nations, these are: Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago. CARICOM wishes to be associated with the statement delivered earlier by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Our group wishes to congratulate you and the members of the Bureau on your election to the helm of this important committee during this 68th Session of the General Assembly. We are confident that you will skilfully discharge your duties in a manner which will lead to the successful outcome of our deliberations and negotiations.

Mr. Chairman,

The work program of the Second Committee covers a wide range of development issues of critical importance to CARICOM. These include macroeconomic policy, international trade, sustainable development, and information and communications technology (ICT) for development, and operational activities for
development. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, our economies have been adversely affected by the global economic and financial crisis. This reality is not overlooked by the UN Secretary General in his report on the International Financial System and Development contained in document A/68/221; where he emphasizes that the problem of sovereign debt distress is "most acute among countries in the Caribbean, which were negatively impacted by the financial crisis..." resulting in several countries running fiscal deficits and increasing borrowing. In the report the SG notes that as a result of our high dependence on tourism and the erosion of trade preferences, this year alone, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis have all sought to restructure portions of their debt.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM reiterates its call for the International Community including the UN development system and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to move beyond the stage of merely taking note of our economic reality, but adopt a more systematic approach to dealing with the development needs of developing countries which are categorized as High and Middle Income Countries, with the goal of providing them with increased access to concessionary financing.

Such an approach, which would incorporate the provision of debt relief and the disbursement of grants and loans on concessionary terms which are not available at this time to countries characterized as High and Middle Income Countries, would serve to ease the unstable economic situation in which many small, vulnerable highly indebted countries within our region have found themselves and prevent any further erosion of the development gains we have made thus far.

Mr. Chairman,

CARICOM is encouraged by the outcome document of the Special Event on the Millennium Development Goals, which was endorsed by our political leaders one week ago. This document renews the call for acceleration of the achievement of the MDGs by the indicative target date of 2015. CARICOM is committed to this
task, and will continue to participate in the deliberations and negotiations in this session of the General Assembly with a view to ensuring that we meet the targets by that deadline, and sustain our development in the Post-2015 era.

Mr. Chairman,

Climate change and sea level rise remain a major threat to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like ours in the Caribbean. This phenomenon undermines our efforts to achieve sustainable development and threatens our survival. CARICOM therefore calls for a renewed effort at all levels to assist SIDS in implementing the Barbados Plan of Action and the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation. CARICOM SIDS renew their pledge to remain engaged in this process and looks forward to the outcome of the International SIDS Conference in Samoa in 2014.

Mr. Chairman,

International Trade plays a fundamental role in advancing the development prospects of developing countries and enhancing our capacity to mobilize domestic financial resources for development. CARICOM countries are negatively affected by supply side constraints; and in some instances are negatively affected by technical barriers to trade and other systemic and implementation issues which need to be addressed with a sense of urgency. In order to maximize the gains from trade, it is necessary to uphold a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system that contributes to growth and sustainable development. In this context CARICOM reiterates its call for the conclusion of the Doha Development Round of Negotiations which commenced over a decade ago. Failure to do so is constricting the development objectives of the round and the explicit commitments to frontally address implementation.

CARICOM emphasizes the urgent need for an informed discussion of international cooperation in tax matters within the context of a meaningful dialogue on
financing for development – that is the common pursuit of all countries to achieve economic growth, meaningful development and poverty eradication. In this connection, CARICOM welcomes the recent decision of ECOSOC to convene annual special meetings of the Council on International Tax Cooperation. CARICOM also believes this decision represents an important step in realizing the mandate given in Doha to strengthen the institutional arrangements to promote international cooperation in tax matters.

It is in this context that CARICOM continues to call for the conversion of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters into an intergovernmental subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. CARICOM strongly believes that the upgrading of the Committee, in this manner, would allow for proper intergovernmental consideration of issues of international tax cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

We are hopeful that the deliberations of this 68th Session of the General Assembly will build on the work conducted in the previous one, and enable us to achieve sustainable development in 2015 and beyond.

I thank you.