

Brief Remarks by**HMFA & FT the Hon. Dr. Kenneth Baugh**

at the

UNU Symposium on Climate Change and Biological Diversity**Tokyo****September 2, 2010****CARICOM, Integration and the Caribbean Sea as a Special Zone**

Colleague Ministers and Senior Officials,

Distinguished Academic Staff

Students and friends of the Caribbean

I want to begin by thanking the organizers of this Symposium and the Government of Japan for hosting this Second CARICOM/Japan Ministerial Meeting. We are honoured to be here and look forward to deepening our collaboration and cooperation with the Japanese Government and the people of Japan.

There is so much to say on the rich history of the Caribbean and its peoples and more importantly, on how the future of our civilization rests on finding sound, lasting answers to the pressing issues of Climate Change and Biodiversity. The fifteen-member Caribbean Community (CARICOM) consists of only about fifteen million in population size across all the territories. We are largely island states and as many of you know – we are diverse in the mix of culture and ethnic groups but remain resilient in our ability to survive what has been a difficult economic time over the last several years.

The establishment of CARICOM and its Common Market in 1973 was the result of many years of effort to fulfill the hope of regional integration – a hope which we still hold dear to us and which we are working steadily to

realize. A former Secretary General of CARICOM (Roderick Rainford) described the quest for integration as:

" something in the nature of an epic struggle: a struggle for congruence between what we proclaim and what we are able to do; a struggle to negotiate, design and erect structures of cooperation and integration where national interest and regional purpose are brought into harmony, and national sacrifice is balanced by national advantage; a struggle to streamline and hone the institutional machinery that serves the mission of integration and cooperation"

This "struggle" as he described it, is not only about institution-building and creating a unique melting pot of cultures with good governance across the region – Indeed the struggle is also to be fought on the environmental front and this Symposium will afford us the opportunity to exchange views on those issues coming at a time when we draw closer to the end of the 10th year of the new Millennium- a time viewed by us as one with great expectations for the future, despite the global economic crisis and the difficult recovery process.

I pause here to single out Haiti, which requires our regional and international support, to shore up the rebuilding process and to facilitate its smooth integration into CARICOM. We want Haiti, in addition to developing its physical infrastructure, to move into a new paradigm built around strong social and political institutions and a new and bright future.

I know that my colleague Ministers will speak today to the issue of the Environment, Climate Change and Biological Diversity – all critical items on the international agenda. My country, Jamaica continues to play an active role in the ongoing climate change negotiations and we look forward to the upcoming COP 16 Meeting in Mexico. We also fully support the Convention on Biological Diversity as a key international instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources and for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits resulting from the use of genetic resources.

Today though, I want to briefly specifically address the efforts of the Caribbean Community to have the international community recognize the Caribbean Sea as a special area. The Caribbean Sea covers an area of approximately 2.64 million square kilometres and the entire area is home to more than 230 million people. Its unique bio-diversity is well known and is characterized by fragile ecosystems. The countries which are washed by the Caribbean Sea are, in addition, highly vulnerable to climate change, sea level rise and natural disasters- of course most are developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). CARICOM has urged developed countries like Japan to support us in our bid for special recognition, as part of the compelling commitment we have to ensure the sustainable management and development of the Sea and its resources for future generations.

Our Caribbean civilization has been very much shaped by the sea - for trade, as a key vehicle of our economies and commerce, for daily living, eating and of course famously, for tourism. It is that Sea that is so often mentioned by our great poets of the region, such as St. Lucian Nobel Prize Winner, Derek Walcott- indeed that Sea is a fragile ecosystem which provides for the economic, social and recreational well being of the people of our Region. As we know, its location also places prominence on this waterway in international commerce. The threat of pollution from ship-generated waste as well of any accidental or deliberately induced spill of hazardous substances such as nuclear materials and toxic waste is of real concern to the life and ecosystem of the region.

We seek your support in securing the development and implementation of a regime to minimize the possibility of conflict and ecological damage. The Caribbean has successfully piloted a resolution at the UN General Assembly (2008) to " promote an Integrated Management Approach to the Caribbean Sea Area in the Context of Sustainable Development". In addition, CARICOM is working closely with the Association of Caribbean States, the ACS, and other partners in initiating the international recognition of the Caribbean Sea and the marine

environment as critical to the economic, social and political fibre of the Caribbean.

To further emphasize, economically it is argued that there is an urgent need to ensure the sustainable use and preservation of the Caribbean Sea, as crucial for the livelihood of various communities in the region. Approximately sixty (60%) per cent of the GNP of the coastal states is derived from the exploitation of the resources of the Caribbean Sea, in particular from marine-based tourism and fisheries. Our tourism revenue alone in most islands accounts for 15-99% of goods and services. Unfortunately, there is no established integrated approach to the management of the industries that benefit from the wealth of resources that the Sea provides. We need to urgently correct this. It is an imperative for our region, in fact CARICOM Member States, enshrined in our Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas (2001), have stipulated that we should cooperate in achieving international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area.

We are committed to working hard on this as a critical part of our foreign and economic policy over the medium and long term. We call on Japan to also recognize the "common patrimony" that the Sea provides to the peoples of the Caribbean and to join with us in seeking the broader support of the international community. The political weight which our Member States collectively bring to the international stage can only benefit from the support of Japan in this venture.

Let us recommit ourselves today as we exchange views at this symposium to find new ways to collaborate on the pressing issues on the international environmental agenda and to see the Caribbean Sea and its future as top of that agenda. Our collective future depends on it.

In closing, I thank you once again for the opportunity to address you today and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far in your beautiful country and the hospitality that you have so generously offered to us.