



FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF
LDCs/SIDS
IN THE WORK OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL



THE GEORGETOWN DECLARATION TOWARDS 2022

DECLARATION OF THE WORKSHOP FOR LDCs/SIDS IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION

**“Engaging with the UN Human Rights Council through the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund:
Achievements, Challenges and Lessons Learnt”**

19-20 November 2018 Georgetown, Guyana

I. INTRODUCTION

We, the Former Beneficiary Delegates and Fellows from the Caribbean Region of the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to support the participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council (**hereinafter LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund**) convened from 19 to 20 November 2018 in Georgetown, Guyana, to attend the LDCs/SIDS Workshop for the Caribbean Region under the theme: “Engaging with the UN Human Rights Council through the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund: Achievements, Challenges and Lessons Learnt”.

Agree to adopt this Outcome Document to be known as **“The Georgetown Declaration: Towards 2022”**;

Reaffirm our commitment to the goals and objectives set out for the convening of Regional Workshops in HRC Resolution 34/40 entitled, **Promoting the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council**), which was adopted by the HRC on 6 April 2017.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The Workshop was held pursuant to HRC Resolution 34/40, with particular focus on its encouragement of the Trust Fund to conduct a Workshop in Africa, Asia and the Pacific and the Caribbean before its tenth anniversary in 2022 to:

- Reflect on its achievements to date in implementing its mandate;
- Identify where further improvements might be made; and
- Assess the value of its activities in fulfilling its training and capacity building support of the engagement of LDCs and SIDS in the work of the HRC and its Mechanisms

III. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We, the Former Beneficiary Delegates and Fellows from the Caribbean Region:

1. Express our profound gratitude to the Government and People of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, the Secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for hosting this Workshop, and for providing all the necessary support;
2. Express also our deepest appreciation to the Secretariat of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund administered by the Human Rights Council Branch of the OHCHR for all the support received since it became operational, including the convening of the First Universal session of the HRC on the occasion of its 10th Anniversary and for organising this Workshop;
3. Express appreciation for the participation of His Excellency Mr. Vojislav ŠUC (Slovenia), President of the UN Human Rights Council Twelfth Cycle (2018), the first sitting President of the Human Rights Council to visit the Caribbean Region;
4. Further express appreciation for the active participation of former delegates supported by the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund from the African, Asian and Pacific regions, for sharing their experiences, lessons learnt, opportunities and challenges and appreciate this cross-regional initiative aimed at bringing together LDCs and SIDS;
5. Express appreciation to all donors to the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund and encourage continued support, and call upon potential donors, including those from the beneficiary countries, to contribute to the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund's continuing efforts to build national capacity in the field of human rights; and
6. Further express appreciation to the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Forum of Small States for their participation in the LDCs/SIDS Workshop for the Caribbean Region.

IV. NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LDCS/SIDS TRUST FUND

We recognize the following, among the notable achievements of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund:

1. The convening of this Workshop for LDCs/SIDS in the Caribbean Region constituted the first of a series of three (3) Workshops to be organized before 2022, the Tenth Anniversary of the Fund, as mandated in HRC Resolution 34/40;

2. This Workshop brought together, for the first time, all delegates and fellows of the Caribbean Region that have participated in a regular session of the HRC with the support of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund. We embraced this Workshop as a unique forum for the exchange of experience, information and ideas and for the documentation of best practices that would further enhance and strengthen the capacity of our countries, nationally, regionally and internationally, to effectively participate in the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms;
3. The milestone reached in the operations of the Trust Fund in June 2017, when the Caribbean region became the first of the three (3) eligible regions to have received 100% support for all of its 14 Member States to participate in the work of the HRC with awards from the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund;
4. The creation of capacity building and supportive mechanisms including induction training, its work in different languages, periodic briefing of LDCs/SIDS at United Nations Headquarters on the outcomes of regular and special sessions of the Human Rights Council, and the creation of an e-learning tool was deeply appreciated.

V. TOWARDS UNIVERSALITY OF THE HRC – LDCS/SIDS MEMBERSHIP

We, the Former Beneficiary Delegates and Fellows from the Caribbean Region:

1. Welcome the election by the United Nations General Assembly of two SIDS, the Commonwealth of The Bahamas and the Republic of Fiji, to the HRC for the period of 2019-2021;
2. Note with appreciation that for the first time since the establishment of the Human Rights Council in 2006, a SIDS from the Caribbean Region was elected as a member of the HRC; and
3. Note with appreciation the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund's policies to encourage the participation of women and persons with disabilities in its Programmes, in accordance with the relevant HRC resolutions.

VI. PROPOSED ACTION POINTS FOR THE 2022 REVIEW OF THE MANDATE OF THE TRUST FUND

After two days of intensive brainstorming, sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learnt, we, the Former Beneficiary Delegates and Fellows from the Caribbean Region participating in this Workshop make the following recommendations that could be considered for inclusion in the report that the Office of the High Commissioner should prepare and present at the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council (February/March 2022 session):

THE WAY FORWARD – PRIORITIES

1. Improving the LDCS/SIDS Trust Fund Programme
 - a) Propose that the Induction Programme continue to be of three days duration, to ensure the participation of the maximum number of beneficiaries;

- b) Expand the capacity building programme of the Trust Fund to include a Training Workshop on the preparation and presentation of draft of resolutions, and an annual “Train the Trainers” Workshop on the procedures of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms

- 2. Ensuring Topics of Relevance to the Caribbean SIDS are Discussed at the HRC

- a) Encourage high-level participation from SIDS in sessions of the HRC, which would allow officials to contribute to the discussion on issues of interest to the Caribbean Region and bring their perspectives to the discourse in the Council
- b) Encourage Caribbean SIDS to engage with Member States, particularly members of the HRC, on issues of importance to SIDS that can be reflected in the HRC agenda and its discussions
- c) Encourage the delivery of joint statements on behalf of CARICOM, particularly on Annual Days (e.g. Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Rights of the Child, Violence against Women)
- d) Encourage the Secretariat of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund to circulate the Programme of Work of the HRC to the CARICOM Caucus at New York and to the CARICOM Focal Point for Human Rights in Geneva.

- 3. Develop the Capacities of SIDS/LDCs with no Geneva Permanent Missions to Participate Meaningfully at HRC Sessions

- a) Seek to institutionalize the briefing of the CARICOM Caucus in New York by the HRC President, the first of which took place at UN Headquarters, New York in July 2018
- b) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat to continue its briefing with New York based LDCs/SIDS Missions after the convening of regular sessions of the HRC, in accordance with Resolution 34/40.
- c) Update the e-learning tool developed by the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund, raise awareness of its availability, and disseminate the tool to all SIDS
- d) Encourage the full use of the information and communication technologies available to follow the work of the HRC
- e) Deepen the relationship between the CARICOM Caucus in New York and the CARICOM Group in Geneva
- f) Encourage the development of regional and sub-regional capacity building initiatives in cooperation with key stakeholders.
- g) Encourage visiting Commonwealth SIDS that participate in the HRC to make full use of the facilities available at the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva.
- h) Encourage CARICOM countries with Missions in Geneva to consider assisting CARICOM countries having interest in attending a particular regular session of the Council

4. **Strengthen the Capacities of SIDS/LDCS with Small Delegations in Geneva**

- a) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat to provide regular briefings to delegations in Geneva in order to improve information sharing and develop the capacities of delegates
- b) Facilitate the participation of Geneva-based delegates in relevant segments of the induction programme or the fellowship programme

5. **Increasing the Number of SIDS Members of the HRC**

- a) Consider the establishment of a framework for ensuring the continuing membership of CARICOM member states on the HRC
- b) Encourage mutual support for HRC candidatures of LDCs/SIDS
- c) Encourage regional groups having SIDS Members to give their support to CARICOM candidatures

6. **Increasing the number of HRC Experts from the Caribbean Region**

- a) Encourage CARICOM member states to establish a database of experts
- b) Encourage governments to put forward and support the nomination of experts, particularly women
- c) Ensure that information regarding appointments to HRC bodies is accessible and widely disseminated
- d) To take the opportunity of the visits of Special Rapporteurs to encourage information sessions with academia etc. around the region.

7. **LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Inter-regional and International Cooperation Networks**

- a) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat to continue and strengthen its collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the CARICOM Caucus of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations New York, the CARICOM Group in Geneva, and other partners to increase participation in the work of the HRC

8. **Key Strategies for ensuring the sustainability of the Trust Fund: Increasing the Donor base**

- a) Seek to expand and broaden the donor contributions base by encouraging the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Secretariat to hold regular briefings for donors of the Trust Fund to highlight the achievements of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund
- b) Request the Trust Fund Secretariat to organize, as appropriate, donor pledging activities in Geneva and New York, in collaboration with countries that are beneficiaries of the Trust Fund. These activities should be conducted at Ambassadorial level

- c) Promote information sharing and raising of public awareness about the Trust Fund, through additional publications and public events centered around notable achievements of the Trust Fund, using various media, including social media.
- d) Promote the Trust Fund in various multilateral fora in order to increase the number of donors and contributions
- e) Encourage the Secretariat of the Trust Fund to continue its cooperation with the CARICOM Secretariat

9. Conduct of the Next Regional Workshops

- a) Recommend to the Trust Fund Secretariat that forthcoming Regional Workshops should be of three days duration, and that former Beneficiary Delegates of the two other regions should be invited to participate
- b) Request the Trust Fund Secretariat and host of the Regional Workshops to brief the donors following the convening of each Workshop
- c) Request the Secretariat to consult broadly on the scheduling of Workshops, to ensure that they do not conflict with other major international meetings
- d) Encourage future presidents of the Human Rights Council to participate in forthcoming Regional Workshops

10. Review of the Declarations of the Regional Workshops

- a) Request the Trust Fund Secretariat to organize prior to the drafting of the OHCHR report a meeting with a cross-section of representatives that participated in the three LDCs/SIDS Regional Workshops to review the Declarations.
- b) A universal session of the Council should be convened on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Trust Fund.

Done in Georgetown on Tuesday, 20 November 2018