

Caricom to assess rapidly changing global landscape



Dr Carla Barnett

GEORGETOWN, Guyana—The secretary general of the Caribbean Community (Caricom) Dr Carla Barnett, says regional heads of Government will assess challenges arising in the rapidly changing global context when they meet in Barbados from February 19-21 for the 48th Regular Meeting of the Conference.

In a message on the meeting's webpage, Barnett stated that the community will seek to devise solutions that advance regional integration and economic and social development.

The secretary general said Caricom chair, Prime Minister Mia Mottley of Barbados, will lead discussions on the progress being made on areas critical to our survival and growth, such as climate change, food and nutrition security, transportation and the free movement of Caricom nationals in the region.

She noted that the theme of the meeting, Strength in Unity: Forging Caribbean Resilience, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development, reflects Caricom's awareness that its gains were under threat.

"This focus reflects our awareness that gains in economic integration, foreign policy co-ordination, and human and social development are under threat from climate change, crime and violence, and increasing global instability."

Caricom's response, she added, requires co-ordination, collaboration, and partnerships.

Heads of Government will welcome distinguished guests, including UN secretary general António Guterres and European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen.

There will also be exchanges with representatives from civil society, labour, the private sector, and youth, whose perspectives are vital for the region's economic stability and prosperity, the secretary general said.

"Our objective will be to ensure that, as we plan, our actions are strategic, meaningful and beneficial to all the citizens of the Caribbean Community," Dr Barnett stated.

Assistant secretary general for Foreign and Community Relations Elizabeth Solomon underscored the importance of the meeting to discuss, among other important issues, Caricom's continued support to Haiti.

While noting that the situation in the French-speaking Member State remains challenging, she said that there has been progress since the establishment of the Transitional Government.

"Positive things have happened since the Transitional Government was put in place. Yes, there continues to be many challenges, there is no denying that... but there is forward movement, and Caricom is going to discuss how best to continue to support," Solomon stated.

The establishment of a Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) has been a key milestone in Caricom's assistance in forging Haitian-led solutions to the complex crises in Haiti.

On March 11, 2024, in Jamaica, the community convened a highlevel meeting on Haiti which resulted in a collective commitment from stakeholders for a peaceful transition of power, continuity of governance, an action plan for near-term security, and a path to free and fair elections.

The Outcome Declaration articulated the outlines of a nine-member Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) agreed by Haitian stakeholders, which would include seven voting members and two non-voting members, representing political parties, the business sector, civil society, and the inter-faith sector.

On April 14, 2024, the TPC was established by decree and sworn in on April 25 2024 to serve until an elected president is inaugurated on February 7, 2026.

In January 2025, Haiti's Transitional Council president, Leslie Voltaire, announced on French

television network, TV5 Monde, that general elections will take place on November 15, 2025, to facilitate the transition by February 7, 2026, to an elected government in accordance with the constitution.

Solomon noted that despite ongoing challenges, election preparations have commenced.

“Caricom continues to support the people of Haiti, particularly through the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and all that the Good Offices of the Secretariat can offer.

The EPG continues to meet and speak with all the stakeholders, who continue to ask for the EPG to remain involved,” Solomon stated.