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STATEMENT ON HAITI
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Caribbean Community Caricom
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Communique issued at the conclusion of the Meeting of the Tenth Special Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community

Statement issued by Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community at the conclusion of emergency session on the situation in Haiti

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) ON THE SITUATION IN HAITI

CARICOM moves to help end political unrest in Haiti

ADDRESS By THE MOST HONOURABLE P.J. PATTERSON, ON, PC, QC, MP
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMAICA

Twenty-Fourth Meeting Of The Conference Of Heads Of Government Of The Caribbean Community

Caricom Foreign Ministers Meet on Critical Foreign and Community Matters

Statement by Caricom heads of government on Haiti

Issued at the conclusion of the 16th Inter-Sessional Meeting of The Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community [in] Paramaribo, Surinam, 16-17 February 2005

The Caribbean Community (Caricom) remains gravely concerned by the overall situation in Haiti. Insecurity, volatility and political polarization combine with joblessness as stumbling blocks to progress.

The Community is particularly disturbed over the deteriorating human rights situation and the continuing violations of the principles laid down in the Caricom Charter of Civil Society.

Allegations of serious abuses at the hands of the police and illegally armed groups must be investigated. The indefinite detention of Lavalas leaders and activists can only be construed as arbitrary detention on the basis of political affiliation.

The continuing detention of former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune is a glaring example. These persons must either be charged and brought before the courts or released forthwith.

It is difficult to conceive of fair elections while the leaders and activists of a major political party remain in arbitrary detention.

The proliferation of illegally-armed groups and their activities constitute a major obstacle to stability. Disarmament and reintegration must be given priority attention to create a security environment conducive to open campaigning and credible elections.

Caricom is encouraged by the growing support in Haiti for a national dialogue for which the international community has committed its support.

A successful process, which promotes reconciliation and political inclusiveness, will have a considerable positive impact on the conduct of the electoral process and on the general political situation.

The Caribbean Community reaffirms its commitment to the welfare of the Haitian people and will continue its engagement for their benefit.

The Community has also consistently highlighted the importance of free and fair elections in returning Haiti to constitutional rule. The recent commencement of the electoral process, with the proclamation of the electoral decree and the adoption of an electoral calendar, permit Caricom to make good on its earlier promise to contribute to the United Nations' peacekeeping effort in Haiti.

Consequently, technical assistance for the electoral process, an essential element of the Caricom Assistance Programme for Haiti, will be forthcoming under the umbrella of the electoral unit of Minustah.

The Community will continue to collaborate with the donor community to find the swiftest and most effective way to make good on their pledges of financial assistance to Haiti in order to address the increasing hopelessness arising from economic stagnation.

To this end, the chief coordinator of the Caricom Task Force will attend the meeting on Haiti in Cayenne in mid-March.

The building of democracy in Haiti and improving the lot of the ordinary Haitian constitute a complex and long-term process to which the Caribbean Community has pledged its assistance.