

CICTE STATEMENT FROM CARICOM IMPACS

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Executive Director (Ag), Mr. Michael Jones, I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for inviting CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) to highlight some of its regional initiatives as it relates to Counter Terrorism Activities within the Caribbean Community during the last year.

The Region recognizes that at this point in time, no country, no region, no sub region can safely say that terrorism is someone else's problem. It is everyone's problem and a threat to all. Our most recent lessons come from New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

During this session of CICTE, this body will focus on the theme of resilience. Within the Caribbean Community, the word resilience is usually used within the context of disaster preparedness and management. However, IMPACS has been advocating and our counterparts in disaster management have acknowledged that disasters are not only about hurricanes, earthquakes or volcanoes but a disaster can be precipitated by a security event, a terrorist attack on critical infrastructure, through a cyber attack and the attack can affect our very livelihoods and the lifeblood of the Region: tourism.

CARICOM has made some significant strides over the last year in addressing the threat of terrorism. In February 2018, the Region approved a common Counter Terrorism strategy to address terrorism within CARICOM. Member States have been actively addressing the threat through capacity building of law enforcement, establishment of CT Units in the Ministries of National Security and within the police forces. Member States are also doing significant work as it relates to drafting and enactment of legislation addressing terrorism financing and the return of foreign fighter. Significant training is being undertaken at the national, regional and hemispheric levels.

CARICOM has recognized that collaboration is key to addressing terrorism successfully. In 2017, CARICOM IMPAC, the OAS and Caribbean Disaster Emergency Agency, the Regional Security System and the Caribbean Public Health Agency all embarked on a project to develop early warning systems and capacities to address disaster, terrorist events and other security events. This project was supported by the European External Action Service. The result of the programme was that the Agencies understood each other's role which encouraged better information gathering and sharing and the ability to prepare for and address the threat in a more meaningful and collaborative manner.

Since 2006, the Region recognized that there is strength in unity and that collaboration was key and rather than 15 small states each have their own border security systems, they agreed to collaborate through the Advance Passenger Information System. As a result of this foresight, all 15 Member States are now compliant with the UNSCR 2178 and 13 are now compliant with UNSCR 2396 which explicitly called for the introduction of Passenger Name Record collection. 13 of the 15 have therefore introduced this requirement legislatively and are in the process of implementation.

Within the last year, CARICOM IMPACS with the assistance of the European Union, US CBP and the German Federal Police have trained over 1000 front line border security officers in targeting, detection of fraudulent documents and behavioral analysis. The success of this programme was in large part due to collaboration with our partners both regional and international. Within the next few months, there are more

planned trainings for border security, intelligence officials and law enforcement officials. Just over a month ago, CARICOM IMPACS in collaboration with UNODC, realized a similar border security programme with the Dominican Republic. With the use of technology via an online learning platform, the CBSI Connect, we were able to train over 140 persons not only in the Dominican Republic but as far south as Argentina. More work will continue in this vein.

Continued strengthening of partnerships is critical and as such we have vigorously pursued activities with all our partners. One of the region's major successes is the approval of an Interpol Regional Liaison Office which will be established and opened later this year to be co-located with CARICOM IMPACS. We see this as a significant success since the work programme of this entity will seek to address within the Caribbean issues such as firearms, cyber security, counter terrorism and migration. The Caribbean, not only, CARICOM will yield significant benefits from this partnership. CARICOM has also revived its agreement with the Central American Integration System (SICA) and counter terrorism activities have been identified as high priority action items. These activities include but are not limited to information and intelligence sharing, asset forfeiture, addressing terrorism financing and the development of operational exercises.

CARICOM continues to be guided by the Inter American Convention against Terrorism and UN Security Council Resolutions. We are also guided by the tenet that counter terrorism policy can only become successful when security is interlinked with development and human rights. Therefore, we encourage a whole of government approach and as such Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programmes are critical. Therefore, CARICOM IMPACS are in the process of planning a series of programmes with partners such as OAS/CICTE, United Nations, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the University of the West Indies to not only further educate law enforcement but the general public.

Please allow me to conclude by reiterating CARICOM's commitment to this process and look forward to working with OAS/CICTE in the coming year.