



The High Commission of Canada to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean
Bishop's Court, St. Michael, Barbados
Email: BDGTNGR@international.gc.ca

To Grenada...with love from Canada

As I end my diplomatic career as Canada's High Commissioner and return to Ottawa, I do so with enormous gratitude and pride for the privilege Prime Minister Justin Trudeau bestowed on me over the past seven years to represent Canada to Guyana, Suriname and CARICOM (2017-2020) and to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean State (2021-2024).

I am humbled by the affection and respect that you have for Canada and our long history with you. You taught me that Canada has been with you for hundreds of years and we — like you — gained our independence from Britain. In the beginning, we traded with you — our cod for your rum — and later traded for other natural resources. In the early 1960s, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's government gave the West Indies Federation two multipurpose ships — the Federal Palm and the Federal Maple, which you used as a ferry to connect you with your neighbouring islands. During Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's tenure in the 1970s and 1980s, in partnership with you, we built schools, airports and even legislatures.

While our relations with you are evolving, we are still here for you and **with** you. We have recently enhanced collaboration between our governments, demonstrated by the first Canada-CARICOM Summit on Canadian soil in Ottawa in October 2023 and multiple prime ministerial and ministerial and citizen visits to and from our countries.

What I have learned from you is **resilience**. In the face of adversity, you continue to rebound and to build back better. Why? Because you come together as a **community**. I have seen this repeatedly — when you shared vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic and, most recently, when you provided relief, personnel and funds to those impacted by Hurricane Beryl because you know that, in spite of your differences, you are neighbours and share the same challenges.

Your Caribbean culture, warmth and hospitality is legendary. It is what draws our Canadian tourists, snowbirds, businesses, universities and colleges and professionals from every sector to your shores. But this is not a one-way street. Canada has been enriched by your diaspora who have contributed to Canada's cultural and economic mosaic and are now part of our Canadian story. Our intertwined past, present and future collaboration is built on shared values, interests and geographic community that continue to connect us.

On a personal note, I was fortunate to be embraced by so many of you who contributed to my knowledge and appreciation of Grenada. A heartfelt thank you for welcoming me to your country. It has been the honour of my lifetime to have represented Canada.



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So this is not farewell but *à la prochaine!*

H.E. Lilian Chatterjee
High Commissioner of Canada to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean
Ambassador to the OECS