



**REMARKS FOR
HONOURABLE DICKON MITCHELL
PRIME MINISTER OF GRENADA
AND CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS
OF GOVERNMENT OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY
FOR
THE SECOND CARICOM-INDIA SUMMIT
GEORGETOWN, GUYANA
20 NOVEMBER 2024**

- Honourable Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India;
- His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana;
- Other Esteemed Heads of Government of CARICOM;
- Dr. Carla Barnett, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community.
- Distinguished, Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, and esteemed delegates and in particular those accompanying Hon Shri Narendra Modi.

First, permit me, Excellencies, to express deep appreciation to my brother President Ali, and to the Government and People of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, for their warm hospitality in hosting all of us and for the excellent arrangements that have been put in place for this Summit. Thank you, my brother.

As Chairman of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), It is with immense honor and privilege that I welcome you all to the 2nd CARICOM-India Summit, the first of which was held in September 2019.

Today, we gather as partners and friends, united by a shared vision of progress, cooperation, and mutual respect. And I will say it, our love for cricket.

The Caribbean Community attaches tremendous value to the shared history, common values, kinship and strong bonds of friendship that we enjoy with the Government and People of India, which have strongly influenced and enriched the diverse and vibrant culture of the Caribbean.

This historic summit is taking place against the backdrop of rapid developments regionally, hemispherically, and globally. The multifaceted and protracted crisis in Haiti, the existential threat we face from climate change, the post-COVID-19 economic recovery challenges, the conflicts in the Middle East, and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war have all contributed to high inflation, global unemployment and have contributed to some measure of despair, uncertainty and anxiety amongst our peoples.

These circumstances have sapped resources, hardened hearts, and shifted the attention of the international community from the multi-faceted challenges facing developing countries. This somewhat gloomy international landscape has further exacerbated the already uncertain outlook for the small and extremely vulnerable island and low-lying states of the Caribbean Community.

However, against this somber back drop, we remain convinced that closer linkages between CARICOM and our trusted partner, India, are part of the very necessary

medicine and intervention needed by the CARICOM Community to better equip it and its citizens to overcome our existing developmental hurdles.

I therefore extend a special acknowledgment to Prime Minister, Honorable Shri Narendra Modi, whose visionary leadership has been instrumental in strengthening the ties between India and CARICOM. Prime Minister Modi's commitment to fostering international partnerships and his dedication to sustainable development have set a remarkable example for us all. His leadership has not only propelled India to new heights but has also opened new avenues for collaboration with our region.

As both the current Chair of Caricom and as Prime Minister of Grenada, I express on behalf of all our citizens our deep gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and the Government and great people of India for India's its proactive and influential role in championing the ideals and aspirations of the Global South.

We commend India's unwavering commitment to the Sustainable Development of our region, especially in this intricate and interconnected era of globalization. It is evident to us that the challenges we face can only be effectively addressed through a spirit of deeper integration and cooperative action among nations. We are particularly appreciative of India's enhanced engagement in recent years, as it demonstrates a genuine eagerness to fortify our bilateral ties and collaboratively confront pressing issues such as the pervasive Digital Divide.

As Prime Minister Modi once said, "***Good governance with good intentions is the hallmark of our government. Implementation with integrity is our core passion.***" These words resonate deeply with our shared commitment to building a future grounded in trust, transparency, and mutual benefit.

Since our inaugural summit, the bonds between CARICOM and India have grown stronger, reflecting our mutual commitment to a partnership built on trust, shared values, and common goals. Our collaboration spans various sectors, including trade, technology, healthcare, education, and climate resilience, each contributing to the sustainable development and prosperity of our regions.

This Summit presents an important and timely opportunity for us as Leaders to engage in frank and meaningful discussions that will redound to our mutual benefit.

As we do so, we are pleased to note that India continues to maintain its position as the fastest-growing major economy among emerging markets and developing countries. Furthermore, India's expertise in such key areas as agriculture, energy, health, human resource development, and information and communications technology is well-known. CARICOM also remains highly grateful to India for the vaccines donated to CARICOM Member States at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Looking ahead, we envision a future where CARICOM-India relations continue to flourish and expand. Closer cooperation and collaboration amongst the leaders of CARICOM Member States and India, would serve to further enhance the partnerships, and contribute to successfully strengthening our existing economic and commercial relations.

Allow me therefore, Prime Minister and my colleague CARICOM Heads, to share some thoughts and perspectives on how we could continue to build on our existing relationship and implement more of the decisions already taken at the First Summit in New York, in September 2019.

Today's Summit agenda reflects priority sectors, such as energy and infrastructure; agriculture and food security; health and pharmaceuticals; technology and innovation; and human resource capacity building.

Our goals for this summit should include:

- 1. Enhancing Trade and Investment:** Despite considerable physical separation between CARICOM and India, we firmly believe that there is significant scope for boosting trade, investment, and financing activities between CARICOM and India. The existing low volume of trade between us can be enhanced through vigorous efforts by our respective government agencies, such as our trade and investment promotion agencies, and our private sector. We aim to create more robust trade links and attract investments that will drive economic growth and development in our regions. [For instance, Trinidad and Tobago and India signed a Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments Agreement, also known as the Bilateral Investment Treaty \(BIT\), in 2007. And prior to that a Double Taxation Treaty. All of Caricom and India, I dare say, should follow suit.](#)
- 2. Advancing Technological Collaboration:** By leveraging India's advancements in technology, we seek to enhance digital infrastructure and innovation within CARICOM member states.
- 3. Strengthening Healthcare Systems:** We should work together to improve healthcare access and outcomes, sharing knowledge and resources to combat global health challenges. [India's export of pharmaceutical products to CARICOM countries is a testament to our ongoing cooperation in this vital sector.](#) I again reiterate the shining example of the donation of Covid 19 vaccines by India to Caricom. But undoubtedly, we can scale up outcomes in this area.
- 4. Promoting Educational Exchange:** We aspire to increase educational opportunities and exchanges, fostering a culture of learning and mutual understanding. [The framework of the CARICOM-India Joint Commission established in 2003 should be used more and is a pivotal tool in addressing](#)

[areas such as agribusiness development, food security, and disaster management.](#)

5. **Building Climate Resilience:** Together, we will address the pressing issue of climate change, developing sustainable practices and solutions to protect our environment and communities. As far back as the first summit in 2019, Prime Minister Modi announced a [\\$150 million credit line from India for renewable energy and climate change initiatives and given the trajectory of the ever worsening climate disasters we face, such initiatives will remain vital to us addressing this issue.](#)

Hon. Prime Minister, as you are aware, as far back as 1985, CARICOM and India signed a Scientific and Technical Cooperation Agreement to promote and develop closer relations in political, economic, environmental, health, scientific and technical fields. The worthy objectives set out then remain as ever relevant today, and therefore this Summit gives us the opportunity to agree on and operationalize areas and initiatives that reflect our existing realities.

So as we consider and accept the report and recommendations emanating from the CARICOM-India Joint Commission Meeting of 6 November 2024, we the leaders of Caricom must ensure the rapid implementation of decisions taken to strengthen our socio-economic, commercial and people to people relations with India.

Conclusion

As we embark on this summit, let us reaffirm our dedication to deepening our partnership. Let us explore new avenues for cooperation, strengthen our economic ties, and work together to build resilient and sustainable communities. Our discussions today will pave the way for a brighter future, where the fruits of our collaboration will be enjoyed by generations to come.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India and Prime Minister Modi for their unwavering support and commitment to this partnership. Your dedication to fostering meaningful dialogue are deeply appreciated.

We approach this summit with a spirit of unity and collaboration. Together, under the exemplary leadership of Prime Minister Modi, we can achieve remarkable milestones and create a legacy of progress and prosperity for our mutual regions.

Thank you.

20 November 2024