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GROUP



Fourth CVF Leaders Meeting: Development Reset and Cooperation

*23 September 2025, 1:15 PM to 2:30 PM (EDT)
Conference Room 12, UN Headquarters, New York City*

Prime Minister of Barbados the Hon. Mia Mottley, Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Fellow Ministers, Distinguished Colleagues,

I have the honour of delivering remarks here today on behalf of His Excellency the President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, who sends his warm greetings and regrets that he cannot be here, as he is at this moment leading Guyana's participation in another biodiversity event.

I wish to begin by placing on record Guyana's sincere appreciation of the outstanding leadership that has been provided to the Climate Vulnerability Forum (CVF) by Barbados, providing a shining example of small and vulnerable countries not merely being passive victims of the problem but instead being proactive architects of the solution.

This 2026 CVF-V20 Leaders Meeting presents an important platform for Guyana to contribute to the global dialogue on climate finance, resilience, and sustainable development. Guyana's experience under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030 provides a practical basis for demonstrating the potential of country-led approaches that connect environmental stewardship with economic and social development along a climate friendly trajectory.

Every country in this room this afternoon has been told that climate vulnerability makes us risky borrowers. It is unfortunate that our forests, reefs, wetlands, and watersheds carry little or no value either in raising revenue to meet our developmental needs or indeed in how our creditworthiness is assessed, when it is these very assets that regulate the planet's climate, secure its water and feed its people. A financial system that cannot see these contributions is mispricing the planet.

Guyana has spent nearly two decades proving that this mispricing can be corrected. In 2009, we became the first developing country to adopt a national LCDS. Today we retain more than 99 percent of our forest cover, some 18 million hectares storing an estimated 19.5 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. We were the first country to be issued jurisdictional forest carbon credits under the ART-TREES standard. At least fifteen percent of the proceeds from the sale of those carbon credits go directly to our indigenous communities, who decide for themselves how that money is spent to improve their communities.

At the same time, Guyana is an oil producer, and we manage that with deliberate caution. Revenue from the oil and gas sector is held in our Natural Resource Fund under a legislated saving and withdrawal framework. This revenue is invested in national development priorities that help diversify our economy, while the LCDS continues to govern how we protect and value our forests. We see these as complementary components of our development plan.

But one country's model is not a system. That is why President Ali launched the Global Biodiversity Alliance, which has grown from 17 founding members to 138 members and

counting. The Alliance exists to turn our biodiversity commitments into bankable transactions.

Guyana asks this forum to stand behind three priorities. Firstly, multilateral financial institutions must consider our natural capital in assessing our debt sustainability. Second, debt-for-nature swaps must move to standard instruments, with common terms, faster execution and multilateral guarantees. Third, biodiversity credits need to be well designed from the start: transparent measurement, independent verification and real benefit-sharing with the communities who do the work of conservation.

These asks sit squarely within the V20 agenda and the Vulnerability to Viability Compact. Finance that is structured, priced and delivered for vulnerable economies must include the value of the nature we protect. Strengthening concessional and predictable financing for climate resilience, infrastructure, and sustainable economic transformation must be prioritised.

Excellencies, Colleagues, Guyana welcomes the conclusion of the Vulnerability to Viability Compact and the establishment of the Lifeline Fund, we support the call for the CVF to be accorded observer status at the United Nations, we endorse the Leadership Declaration, and we support the proposal that Barbados be granted an extension of term in the leadership of the CVF.

I thank you.

THE HONOURABLE DR. ASHNI SINGH

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