



15TH HIGH-LEVEL FORUM FOR CARIBBEAN MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER

BASSETTERRE, SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS, OCTOBER 14-15 2019

*"From Strategy to Execution: Preparing the Caribbean for the Regional Strategic
Action Plan (RSAP)"*

DECLARATION OF BASSETTERRE



The Ministers responsible for Water and Heads of Delegations participating in the *15th High-Level Forum for Caribbean Ministers Responsible for Water (HLF-Water)*, assembled in Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis during the period October 14 – 15, 2019;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the availability of freshwater is a global, regional and national challenge, which is being accelerated by the negative impacts of climate change on the hydrological cycle and that current water resources require appropriate management, protection and utilization;

HIGHLIGHTING that the concept of water security in the Caribbean Region is multidimensional in scope and along with wastewater management is the lynchpin of economic growth and social equity, and that many Caribbean countries suffer severe loss of life, infrastructure and finances from *inter alia* extreme drought, flooding, hurricanes, pollution, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, watershed degradation and water scarcity;

RECOGNISING the aims and aspirations of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) which call on all States and relevant actors to contribute to national development in a manner that would ensure long-term sustainability, particularly SDG 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation, and the critical need to provide reliable and sustainable water supply and wastewater treatment to sustain livelihoods, human well-being and socio-economic development;

FURTHER RECOGNISING that the success of the RSAP depends on vision, leadership and commitment of both regional development partners and the national stakeholders;

ACKNOWLEDGING FURTHER the efforts of the international and regional partners such as the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association (CAWASA), Caribbean Desalination Association (CaribDA), Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), Global Water Partnership Caribbean (GWP-C), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its associated Global Environmental Facility (GEF) funded IWEco project, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO-IHP) as well as other key stakeholders for the range of programmes, projects, technical assistance and training activities which enable Caribbean States to address the sustainable management of water resources;

RECALLING the commitments made in the:

- Castries Call for Collective Commitment and Action on Sustainable Development, 2019;
- Declaration on Climate Change at the 39th Regular Meeting of the Conference Heads of Government of CARICOM, 2018;
- Decision of the 15th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) to form a CARICOM Consortium of Water Institutions, 2008;

RECALLING FURTHER the in-principle acceptance statement of the Regional Strategic Action Plan for Governance and Building Climate Resilience in the Water Sector in the Caribbean (RSAP) from the 14th HLF for Caribbean Ministers Responsible for Water held in Montego Bay, Jamaica in 2018, calling for the Member States, CWWA and partners to begin implementing the RSAP;

RECOGNISING FURTHER that the purpose of the CWWA is to bring together the water and sanitation community in the Caribbean towards the protection of public health and the promotion of sustainable development, foster mutual knowledge and best practice, provide a forum for the debate and sharing of ideas and experiences on water, wastewater and solid waste matters, as well as implement any other mechanism of interaction that enables the achievement of its purpose, which is to increase cooperation, integration and planning among Member States, partners and stakeholders for the benefit of its citizens;

CONFIRMING CWWA as lead entity for the HLF-Water and the willingness of CWWA to act as lead agency for the RSAP;

THEREFORE DECLARE:

1. Their reassurance to citizens that appropriate and timely action is being taken to address water, wastewater and sanitation challenges and build a climate-resilient water sector;
2. Their commitment to continue the collaboration and sharing of best practices and information on actions to meet the agenda set out in the RSAP;
3. Their commitment to deepen and increase the cooperation and sustainability of efforts among the Caribbean States and international partners to more effectively address the

- water, wastewater and sanitation challenges in the Caribbean and ensure the monitoring and evaluation of program implementation for effective results;
4. Their commitment to greater collaboration with regional and international organizations, and private sector institutions, as well as with the Individual Member States and the CWWA, in advancing water security throughout the Caribbean;
 5. Their commitment to the First Implementation Plan – Regional Level Responses (attached) which outlines the actions to cross-cutting issues and responses with regional collaboration;
 6. Their commitment to work with the RSAP partners and agreement, at the national level, to execute the First Implementation Plan and support their respective Country's Action Plan;
 7. Their support for CWWA to act as lead agency based on consensus of national and regional stakeholders (partners) to coordinate and monitor progress on the RSAP;
 8. That the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) be approached through the lead Head with Responsibility for Water to strengthen CARICOM's support to countries in water, wastewater and sanitation matters, and to endorse the RSAP and First Implementation Plan – Regional Level Responses;
 9. That through the COTED, the CARICOM Secretariat invites the Heads of Government to note, in their review of Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 6, the outcomes of the 15th HLF-Water, the RSAP, and the First Implementation Plan – Regional Level Responses;
 10. Their agreement to meet annually through the HLF-Water to review the progress being made to achieve the pillars outlined in the RSAP based on pre-agreed targets and to consider any new issues affecting water, wastewater and sanitation in Caribbean states;
 11. Their sincere gratitude to the Government and People of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the gracious hospitality over the course of this Ministerial Meeting, and to the Government of Saint Lucia for its gracious decision to host the 16th High Level Forum for Caribbean Ministers responsible for Water in 2020, to pursue water security among Caribbean States.