

## PM remarks for Regional Group Meeting – Latin America and the Caribbean

20 May 2020

Merci, ambassadeur Arriola-Ramírez, de réunir ce groupe aujourd’hui.

Thank you, Ambassador Arriola-Ramírez, for bringing us together today.

As you know Canada so well from your previous assignment as Ambassador in Ottawa, I am happy to see you preside over this meeting today.

Over the past few months, we’ve all had to take unprecedented action to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect our people.

And that means engaging on the world stage. Because keeping our citizens safe means defeating the virus wherever it is found.

My ministers and I have spoken with many of you as we work together towards this end.

Minister Champagne has set up a cross regional Coordination Group to exchange best practices and help maintain supply chains, among other issues.

And we so appreciate your insights, advice, and candor.

The spirit of cooperation among our countries has been exemplary, but it shouldn’t come as a surprise.

After all, we’re more than just neighbours. We are partners and friends, whose past, present, and futures are intertwined.

Over 1 million Canadians draw their heritage from your countries, including thousands in my electoral district of Papineau in Montreal.

And Canada is stronger because of them.

[Pause]

Over the years, we have grown closer as partners.

Today, half of Canada’s free trade agreements are with countries in the Americas.

We’ve worked closely with many of you to support the people and government of Haiti as they address political, security, humanitarian, and development challenges.

Canada is also cooperating with Argentina and Uruguay to increase the participation of women through the Elsie Initiative on Women in Peacekeeping Operations.

And a few years ago, we took a strong stance against the economic embargo of Cuba when we helped facilitate back-channel talks between the Cuban and US governments.

We also continue to work closely together at the OAS, the Commonwealth, l’OIF, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, the IMF, the World Bank, and of course, here at the UN.

My experience working alongside you in these forums has taught me that while you are an incredibly diverse group, you all want to get things done.

There are countless examples of how the United Nations and the Security Council have benefitted from your experiences, but I want to pay particular tribute to Ambassador King of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Ambassadors Cortorreal and Singer of the Dominican Republic.

Ambassador King – thank you for your leadership in helping the Security Council adapt to physical distancing.

Ambassadors Cortorreal and Singer – Canada is especially grateful for your work to advance the Council’s agenda on climate-related disasters.

Climate change is the single greatest challenge facing our world, and we’re grateful to see the Dominican Republic bring this issue to the forefront.

I also want to recognize Peru and Bolivia’s work on the Colombian peace process, as well as their support of Haiti on its path towards stability.

And I’m pleased that Mexico plans to bring the same level of ambition, expertise, and commitment to the Council next January.

[Pause]

My friends, these are just some examples of how this group is building a better future for people.

And Canada shares many of the same priorities as you.

We are seeking a seat on the UN Security Council because we want to work with you to:

- (1) sustain peace;
- (2) address climate change;
- (3) advance gender equality;
- (4) promote economic security; and,
- (5) strengthen multilateralism.

We’re not here to advance a narrow agenda, but that of the UN as a whole.

We want to bring nations together around shared goals and work as partners to achieve them.

Because we know that having a diversity of views and experiences at the table is how we can find lasting solutions.

Canada’s story is one of people from different backgrounds coming together to build something greater than themselves.

And that’s why collaboration is at the heart of everything we do, wherever we go.

[Pause]

For the past few months, governments everywhere have been working tirelessly to keep people safe and healthy.

Marc-André has echoed your concerns regarding the impacts of the pandemic not only on the health of people, but on the economy.

The current crisis has strengthened Canada's belief in the need for stronger, more inclusive multilateralism.

The virus knows no borders.

That's why we are working with our partners around the globe on an inclusive, comprehensive, and sustainable response.

To support those on the frontlines of this crisis, Canada committed nearly \$160 million for humanitarian partners and countries most in need.

We're also coordinating with our International Monetary Fund partners to provide immediate debt relief to the most vulnerable countries.

And to help meet the urgent needs of developing nations, we've announced a loan of up to \$1 billion to the IMF.

Of course, as we work to defeat COVID-19, finding a vaccine is a top priority.

Canada pledged \$850 million to accelerate the global development of COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, testing, and research alongside the European Union and other partners.

But that's only a first step. We must also scale-up production and ensure that it is accessible to all.

That's why we announced \$600 million for GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and the W.H.O. – two organizations that have the capacity and the infrastructure in place to do this kind of work.

Our Minister of International Development, Karina Gould, who is with us today, led our government's response in this area.

[Pause]

Now more than ever, we need to work together to mitigate the impacts of this pandemic.

On May 28<sup>th</sup>, the UN Secretary-General, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, and I will convene a discussion on how we will kickstart our economic recovery, launching a process to issue recommendations on the way forward.

And I hope to see your governments represented.

I also want to take this opportunity to personally thank all of those who have engaged with the Group of Friends of SDG Financing.

Your contributions and advice inspired Canada to make economic security a central pillar of its UN Security Council platform.

Working with you helped us realize that to prevent conflict and build sustainable peace, people need economic opportunities.

This core idea is driving our work as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

It led our work as Chair of the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and it's also the kind of thinking we hope to bring to the Security Council.

Merci beaucoup. Gracias. Obrigado.