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STATEMENT

by

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To the United Nations**

**Session 4
Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
“Employment and decent work, youth, social protection,
education and culture**



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Mr. Co-Chair,

I speak on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM acknowledges the important linkages between employment and decent work, youth, social protection, education and culture. In our view joint consideration of these themes covers a broad spectrum of the sustainable development agenda at the national and regional levels. Additionally, the nexus between education, youth and job creation constitutes fertile ground for furthering the MDG education agenda and enabling the global community to build on the progress already made in this area.

Governments of the region are already engaged in addressing employment and decent work, youth, social protection, education and culture in an integrated manner through the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation, which targets vulnerable groups such as women and youth. Leveraging culture as a contributor to development and a potential driver of entrepreneurship and job creation is also under active consideration in many countries of the region, however, several challenges remain and further work is required with strengthening the capacity of the creative industries to contribute to economic growth.

Mr. Co Chair,

Youth unemployment, and related issues that affect youth, such as poverty, inadequate education systems and poor health care constitute major development challenges for CARICOM. This is especially so since young people under the age of 30 comprise approximately 60 per cent of the region's population. CARICOM Governments are therefore committed to tackling all youth related issues as a matter of priority, and are of the view that:

- Young people should be at the centre of development policy, planning and implementation.
- Youth development and empowerment should be prioritized and well resourced, and countries' performance in youth development should be monitored and reported on.
- National youth employment policies should be linked to national

macroeconomic development plans and young people should be involved in national and local-level labour policies and programmes.

Youth development must be adequately represented in the post 2015 global development agenda and, as a result of the myriad developing issues which affect youth, could be considered as a cross cutting issue. Consequently, youth related indicators could be a useful way of addressing all issues relating to youth in the context of possible sustainable development goals.

Mr Co Chair,

CARICOM supports the assessment of the TST Issues Brief that social protection is one of the foundations for inclusive equitable and sustainable development and that it can play a transformative role in addressing, not only symptoms, but causes of poverty and social exclusion. It is clear that this issue is a cross cutting one which should be considered throughout the spectrum of future sustainable development goals.

CARICOM reiterates its full support for the employment and decent work agenda and remains open to the consideration of a stand-alone goal on employment and decent work which could include appropriate targets or indicators on social protection and prioritise the needs of vulnerable groups. In our view such a goal could also address:

- job creation and the promotion of entrepreneurship as top priorities;
- targets and indicators in the areas of education and skills training which would stimulate action to improve the linkages between curriculum development and labour market demands;
- the role of culture as a driver of development and the linkages between culture and entrepreneurship and job creation

I thank you