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PRESS RELEASE

UN Special Envoy visits Dr Gonsalves

On Monday July 22, 2019, a special envoy from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); Vincentian, Dr Richard Byron-Cox made a special call on Prime Minister Dr Ralph Gonsalves to deliver an invitation on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Ibrahim Thiaw. Dr Byron-Cox is currently on a regional mission to several CARICOM member countries encouraging their participation in the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNCCD.

COP 14, which will be held in New Delhi, India from September 2nd to 13th 2019, will feature a high-level segment that would be attended by delegates from 197 signatories to the convention on September 9th and 10th 2019. The invitation from the Executive Secretary seeks the agreement of Dr Gonsalves to “co-chair a key high-level dialogue at COP 14 on **Land, climate and renewable energy**”. The Executive Secretary noted that he was cognizant of the administration’s unique achievements in the area of renewable energy and stated in his letter of invitation, “*I am aware of your practical and passionate support for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and of your special concern for the protection and sustainable development of Small Island States (SIDS) and for these two reasons feel your contribution to this session can be more than invaluable*”.

The UNCCD also indicated that the invitation to Dr Gonsalves was not limited to the co-chairing of the high-level segment, but that they would be delighted to

make full use of his expertise and experience during the COP as such would be proposing a program of activities during his attendance at COP 14.

The UNCCD is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management and hosts its Conference of the Parties every two years. The last COP in 2017 was held in Ordos, China.

July 24th 2019