



**The Prime Minister
St. Vincent and the Grenadines
West Indies**

**SHAPING AND ENHANCING THE JOINDER BETWEEN EUROPE,
LATIN AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN: THE CELAC-EU SUMMIT.**

By

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The long—awaited summit between leaders of the Community of States of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC) and the European (EU) is scheduled for July 17th – 18th, 2023, in Brussels. Representatives of the sixty States (33 of CELAC and 27 of the EU), almost one-third of the membership of the United Nations, and comprising some 1.2 billion people, will arrive at conclusions which are likely to impact the lives, living, and livelihoods of the people of these two regions and perhaps influence the unfolding human condition elsewhere.

Europe's initial contact with Latin America and the Caribbean over 500 years ago unleashed forces which altered, in irreversible ways, the political economy and society of our two regions. Through the fever of history, Europe re-made our America and itself: Colonialism, racism, native genocide, the enslavement of African bodies, globalised capitalism, technological advancements and the spread of Christianity transformed both our America and Europe, in an unequal joinder.

The reclamation of independence in our America between the 19th and 20th centuries, the end of slavery, and the evolution of a “creolised” civilisation of authenticity, historical legitimacy, and nobility have engendered in us a profound sense of self-mastery to engage the world, including Europe, in the interest of humanity and our own humanisation. “Our America” as envisioned by Toussaint L’ Overture, Simon Bolivar, Jose Marti, and Marcus Garvey is the construct of our times. Accordingly, CELAC, as the umbrella political vehicle of our America, is determined to shape and enhance our joinder with Europe, in

a manner befitting of our respective civilisations, in peace, security, prosperity, and sustainable development **for all**.

We in CELAC appreciate that of all time, only the future is ours to desecrate; the present is the past; and the past, mischiefs galore. Europe understands, too, that in our quest to avoid the desecration of our future, the option of subordination—superordination is unavailable; a creative partnership of equals, without pre-conditions, with an agreed agenda and optimally satisfactory outcomes, efficaciously implemented on an on-going basis, is the only viable path forward. A truly “new world” between Europe and our America demands that we do **not** look forward to the past; the future is not behind us; elementally, it is before us.

In charting the way forward, CELAC realises that men and women make history but only to the extent that the circumstances of history and the contemporary condition permit them so to make. We do not, ourselves choose these circumstances; but we can, together, change them for the better, for all of humanity.

The agenda for a “new world” partnership between CELAC and the EU at the Brussels Summit in July 2023 necessarily includes seminal items: Social Inclusion—Poverty Reduction, Social Equality, Reparations, the relevant Sustainability Development Goals; Climate Change, Biodiversity, Land Degradation; Health, Pandemics, and Wellness; Financing for Development, inclusive of the Bridgetown Initiative; Connectivity—Air, Sea and Digital; People-to-People linkages in Education, Culture, Sports; Investment and Economic Partnerships; Crime and Citizen Security; Political Dialogue on the contemporary issues of conflict, peace, mature diplomacy, and regional integration.

To be sure, both CELAC and the EU have their own priorities and emphases; that is understandable. Still, the urgent challenges extant in the contemporary circumstances globally, for Europe and our America, compel us to focus on an agreed bundle of matters to make a difference for the better, **for all** of our respective peoples.

The urgency of the contemporary human condition was put in a recent letter (April 03, 2023) to all Heads of Government of the member-states of the United Nations by the esteemed Secretary-General of the United Nations, our dear friend Antonio Guterres:

“The multiple issues of the last three years have dealt a major blow to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation efforts. Millions have been pushed into poverty. Inequalities have risen considerably. The rights of women and girls have been under siege. And the urgent and existential business of averting climate change catastrophe has been undermined. Even before these crises hit, we were not on track to meet the goals of 2030. Many critical policy changes, innovations, transitions and investments have not advanced at the speed or scale required. And on every front—COVID 19, Climate Action, SDG Financing—the international community has not done enough to give the most vulnerable countries a fair chance.”

The upcoming CELAC-EU Summit has the potential to contribute leadership, and more, to addressing of these intractable global challenges which impact all our 60 countries in the CELAC-EU nexus, and to tackle our own specific troubling concerns. The world is watching us; so, too, emphatically are the peoples in our America and Europe. We must not disappoint them.

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