PLACE YOUR LEGAL NOTICES & CLASSIFIED ADS
Guyana Chronicle THE NATION'S NEWSPAPER
WE OFFER THE BEST RATES
BUSINESS HOURS
MONDAY - THURSDAY 8:00 - 16:30 HRS
FRIDAY 8:00 - 15:30 HRS
For more info:Call the Advertising Dept. Tel.# 225-4475/226-3243-9 Fax: 225-0663, Email:classi_advt@yahoo.com
PICKUP A COPY OF THE GUYANA CHRONICLE
SUBSCRIBE NOW!
WE CAN DELIVER TO YOUR HOME OR OFFICE.
FREE DELIVERY AROUND GEORGETOWN. CONTACT:226-3243-9 EXT 252/247

'Take advantage of flawed Copenhagen Accord' – President Jagdeo told regional environment ministers

By **Staff Reporter** - September 3, 2010

COUNTRIES in the region should have a collective position on climate change and take advantage of what little there is in the flawed Copenhagen Accord instead of forlornly looking ahead to COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico, where the chances of a binding agreement are slim to none. This is according to President Bharrat Jagdeo, speaking yesterday at the opening ceremony of the Third Joint Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) and the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) at the Guyana International Conference centre, Liliendaal, East Coast Demerara.

Leading the meeting with President Jagdeo was Stephenson King, Prime Minister of St. Lucia and the region's Head of Government with lead responsibility for climate change and sustainable development in the quasi-Cabinet of the Conference of Heads of Government in the Community.

The President said when heads spoke of the meeting, they wanted it to be devoid of too many formalities and technicalities. He said that they would have spent the entire morning in a very interactive way discussing the issue of climate change for the region.

“We need to emerge from this meeting with some very concrete decisions and Prime Minister King and I will try bring a perspective to what the [Caricom Heads] have agreed to, and hope that we can remain faithful to their decisions as enshrined in the Liliendaal Accord.

President Jagdeo said many people are disappointed with the Copenhagen Summit and the decisions made there. He said many people are still licking their wounds, adding “I don’t think we have time for self-pity and to be engaged in those issues because climate change, as we all know, has a disproportionate impact on our region. We can’t afford to stand still. We can’t afford not to do anything or to wait on the international community.”

President Jagdeo said that it is important that we emerge from this meeting with a very realistic understanding of “where we are, or where we have gotten to after Copenhagen.” He said there are many negotiating processes that are linked to the UNFCCC taking place, and these hopefully will impregnate the process and allow some positive outcome on these issues. He said at these meetings, REDD plus and long term financing are discussed at a separate level.

“We are very disappointed that much work has not been done on the fast track financing. It is very important that we take stock but not to dwell too much on that, because if we spend our time looking at Cancun and what is possible in Cancun, we may lose the opportunity or we may lose the momentum to grab hold of the few opportunities that are already there that have emerged from the Copenhagen Accord, as flawed as it is, and those opportunities can be significant for the development of our region,” he said.

IT’S ABOUT POLITICS

The President said the negotiations are not just about the technical issues, but rather a political process. “It’s about politics. When countries go to the negotiating table they go with political positions,” he said, adding that the large countries like the United States, China and India go with positions on what is good for them. “We in this region have to be careful that we don’t get so sucked into the technical process that we lose sight of the many [political and economic] opportunities that are there,” he said.

He expressed disappointment that some of the money pledged in Copenhagen will be disbursed as loans and not grants. The Copenhagen Accord said that there will be US$10 billion per annum for the next three years for vulnerable countries. He said that even if 35 percent of that money goes as loans, there remain US$6.5 billion per year in grant resources that have been pledged and ready to be expended.

“We need to ensure that whilst we’re focusing on getting the perfect agreement in Cancun, that we use this opportunity now. First of all, we have to push the United Nations to move the process forward. It means the only way resources are going to come into the bank accounts of our treasuries is if we have the eligibility criteria as to who will access those resources defined, that we have the financial mechanism to intermediate those resources defined and established, and most importantly, that we are project-ready to use those resources,” he said.

The President added that many countries in the region are not project-ready. He questioned where the money will go should the region be eligible for US$500M of climate financing. He said that each country must have project documents that meet the requirements for drawing down those funds.

Prime Minister of St. Lucia, Stephenson King, said the joint COTED/COHSOD meeting was one of great timing and against the backdrop of “where we came from”, particularly since Copenhagen.

“For us who have been monitoring and have been involved in the effort of dealing with the issues of climate change, we recognize that very little has come out of Copenhagen. Many of us who were in Copenhagen were very disappointed at the outcome. However, it would appear that there was a bit of relaxation on the way forward, while others seem to be persevering in that endeavour,” King said.

He said it is felt that there is a need for leaders to be more forceful on these issues, understanding that while we ourselves at CARICOM, as a single entity, do not hold any negotiating power or opposition at the UNFCCC, “it is in our interest for us to find a common ground that will allow us through SIDS to be able to influence the process and the way forward.”

A NEED TO COME TOGETHER

“So for us, we felt that there was a need to come together at a joint session of COHSOD and COTED to focus on the real issues and analyse where we are and what we have achieved and how we proceed. To look at it from the standpoint of CARICOM as a body rather than individual territories seeking in their own interest; to understand that there is a commitment to the Liliendaal Declaration that we must renew, the need for a review of that declaration which speaks broadly and collectively on all of the issues affecting member territories and affecting CARICOM as a whole,” he said.

“We in Caricom must maintain our focus on the vision at attempting to arrive at a legally binding declaration. Many of us believe that we may never arrive at a legally binding declaration, but even while that may be so, we must maintain our focus and demonstrate that we understand… that there is a commitment on our part because of our interests,” he said.

King said that on the issue of targets, until the science proves otherwise ,“we must continue to maintain the target set – 1.5 degrees Celsius as far as limits are concerned and 350 parts per million.”

He said, “We must continue to maintain our focus and our commitment to targets. Again in that regard, it is felt that we may never arrive there, but we must leave room for us to manoeuvre even as we continue to concentrate and continue to advocate those targets, to leave room in the event of failure to get there,” he said.

“To do this, we need to grab hold of the situation and bring about the political thrust that President Jagdeo spoke about; to take it from being mere technical and to blend it with the political and give it purpose on the way forward. Therefore, it is important that we seek and develop a strategy that would allow us to move this process forward, with the political directi

on and guidance necessary to arriving at our destination,” he said.

“I would hope that out of this meeting today, [we would] arrive at this strategy [which] would allow for the political and the technical to come together to bring about that symbiosis necessary to advocating and purposefully moving forward with our agenda,” he said.

King said that he must certainly commend President Jagdeo for his demonstration of commitment and dedication not only in the interest of Guyana, but in the interest of the entire region, “for which I support him and embrace him for that position and that leadership that he has demonstrated. He stands out as being one who is truly committed to that cause. It is my responsibility as lead spokesperson on sustainable development with focus on climate change at this time to give [President Jagdeo] the necessary support needed in moving forward, and that is being done from the basis of the very Liliendaal Declaration which speaks to the issue of our affirmation to understand that the climate change [fight] should be undertaken on the basis of common but differentiated, as well as historical responsibilities, and that it should not compromise the ability of Small Island Developing States to pursue sustainable development. The sharing of the cost of addressing climate change should be equitable and should not perpetuate poverty.”

King said, “While we all have our individual agenda, while we all have our own ideas, we must understand that we belong to a collective, and so we must work together.”

CANCUN AND BEYOND

He said that the meeting should prepare the Ministers of the region for Cancun and beyond. “What do we anticipate in Cancun? What should we push for Cancun and what is likely to happen beyond Cancun and [how do we] prepare ourselves for it?” he asked.

King said that countries in the region need to have an appreciation for the preparation of projects and have them available, so that when funds are made available, “we all are ready to utilize those funds whether it is for mitigation, adaptation measures or otherwise.”

The St. Lucia PM said delegates to the meeting must leave the event “having very clear and unambiguous decisions on the way forward.” He said however, in moving forward, “we need to ensure that our institutional arrangements in the region, at the Caribbean Community Change Centre, the Caribbean Development Bank (CBD), which may be able to be used as a conduit for the channeling of resources, that the framework for doing such is in place, and that we are ready to undertake that responsibility.”

He said the capacity must be looked at to ensure that the there is the ability to move the process forward “and achieving the outcomes that we so desire.” He said that as the strategic political and technical approach is developed, “there is also the need to position ourselves and to utilize our very strong position…to influence the process moving

forward.”

Staff Reporter