Bridgetown Declaration

Adopted in Bridgetown, Barbados, on 5 June 2026

PREAMBLE

We, former Beneficiary Delegates and Fellows of the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Work of the Human Rights Council (hereinafter the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund), coming from 14[1]countries in the Caribbean region, convened from 3 to 5 June 2026 in Bridgetown, Barbados, to attend the LDCs/SIDS Workshop for the Caribbean Region under the theme: "*Assessing the value of the activities of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund in fulfilling its training and capacity-building mandate: identifying achievements and areas for improvement*",

Recalling Human Rights Council resolution 49/32, which encouraged the organization of regional workshops in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific to assess the value of the Trust Fund's training and capacity-building activities and to identify achievements and areas for improvement,

Recognizing the important contribution of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund over the past fifteen years in strengthening the engagement of least developed countries and small island developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council (hereinafter the HRC) and its mechanisms, and in enhancing the capacity of government officials to participate effectively in international human rights processes,

Building on the outcomes and recommendations of the Georgetown Declaration adopted in Guyana in 2018, and drawing on the reflections, testimonies, discussions and exchanges held during this workshop,

Acknowledging the particular circumstances, vulnerabilities and priorities of Caribbean States, including the challenges posed by limited human and financial resources, climate change and natural disasters, while reaffirming the value of multilateral cooperation and meaningful participation in international human rights mechanisms,

[1] Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago

Expressing our appreciation to the Government and people of Barbados for hosting this workshop, and to OHCHR and the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Secretariat for facilitating this important regional dialogue,

Adopt the following recommendations aimed at further strengthening the training and capacity-building activities of the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund and enhancing the engagement of Caribbean States in the work of the HRC and the wider international human rights system.

1. Improving the LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Programme

(a) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat to:

i. Collaborate with the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office and Commonwealth Small States Office to supplement the induction programme with pre-sessional virtual capacity-building activities, in order to assist the beneficiary delegates before they travel to Geneva for a more effective transition into the HRC environment, particularly for participants without a Permanent Mission in Geneva;

ii. Open the online pre-session programme of the Trust Fund to CSO Members of national coordination mechanisms;

iii. Expand the capacity building programme of the Trust Fund, in collaboration with the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office, to include a Training Workshop on the preparation and presentation of draft of resolutions, and an annual "Train the Trainers" Workshop on the procedures of the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms;

iv. Facilitate and support the creation of a digital platform where current and former beneficiary delegates and fellows can share their experiences;

v. Update the HRC e-learning tool and explore the creation of a resource hub for LDCs and SIDS in the region through the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office;

vi. Facilitate the accreditation of self-sponsored CSO Members of national coordination mechanisms to the UN HRC to attend HRC sessions, upon request.

2. Ensuring topics of relevance to the Caribbean SIDS are discussed at the HRC

(a) Encourage Caribbean LDCs and SIDS to:

i. Ensure high-level participation in HRC sessions, which would allow officials to contribute to the discussion on issues of interest to the Caribbean Region and bring their perspectives to the discourse in the Council;

ii. Engage with Member States, particularly members of the HRC, on issues of importance to the Caribbean region to have them reflected in the HRC agenda and its discussions;

iii. Continue the delivery of CARICOM joint statements, particularly on annual days and panel discussions (e.g. on topics such as rights of persons with disabilities, rights of the child, violence against women, and climate change);

iv. Increase their engagement with special procedure mandate holders and Caribbean delegates at the HRC through dialogues and meetings facilitated by the Trust Fund Secretariat.

(b) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat, in collaboration with the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office, to:

i. Facilitate strategic partnerships with the CARICOM Secretariat and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) for information sharing and coordination on human rights issues;

ii. Support strengthened coordination between the CARICOM caucus in New York and the CARICOM Human Rights Focal Point in Geneva so as to enhance the effective participation and representation of CARICOM LDCs and SIDS in the work of the Human Rights Council and its mechanism;

iii. Engage with the CARICOM Human Rights focal point in Geneva as well as the OECS Commission to promote the inclusion of human rights matters at their regional meetings.

3. Develop the capacities of LDCs/SIDS with no permanent representation in Geneva to participate meaningfully in HRC sessions

(a) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat to:

i. Seek to institutionalize the briefing of the CARICOM Caucus in New York by the HRC President, the first of which took place at UN Headquarters, New York in July 2018;

ii. Resume its briefing with New York based LDCs/SIDS Permanent Missions after the convening of regular sessions of the HRC, in accordance with Resolution 49/32.

(b) Reiterate the importance for LDCs/SIDS, in general, and in particular those with no permanent representation in Geneva, to be able to participate virtually in HRC sessions and therefore the need to reinstate hybrid modalities at the HRC.

4. Strengthen the capacities of LDCs/SIDS with small delegations in Geneva

(a) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat to:

i. Provide regular briefings to LDCs/SIDS delegations in Geneva in order to improve information sharing and develop their capacities;

ii. Continue to open the induction programme to all Geneva based LDCs/SIDS delegations, and in particular diplomats newly posted or reassigned to their Geneva mission.

5. Increasing the number of LDCs/SIDS members of the HRC from the Caribbean region

(a) Call upon the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office and the Commonwealth Small States Office to raise awareness among CARICOM member States, particularly through conversations with the Permanent Missions in Geneva and the CARICOM Caucuses in New York and in London on the importance and impact of membership on the HRC.

6. Increasing the engagement with elected or appointed experts of UN human rights mechanisms from the Caribbean Region.

(a) Encourage the CARICOM Secretariat to:

i. Collaborate with the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office to establish and maintain a database of experts, from the Caribbean region, elected or appointed to UN human rights mechanisms and promote its use as a resource by CARICOM member States;

ii. Ensure that information regarding elections and appointments to HRC bodies and other UN human rights mechanisms is accessible and widely disseminated, including through the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office.

(b) Calls upon the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office to:

i. Raise awareness on UN human rights expert bodies or mechanisms and encourage Caribbean LDCs/SIDS to nominate candidates for the election or appointment to those expert bodies and mechanisms;

ii. Also, raise awareness on the work of HRC special procedures and encourage Caribbean LDCs/SIDS to extend invitations to special procedure mandate holders to visit their countries, as well as to engage with them at a high-level beyond official visits.

7. LDCs/SIDS Trust funds Inter-regional and International Cooperation Networks

(a) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat to continue and strengthen its collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, the CARICOM Caucus of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations New York, the CARICOM Permanent Missions in Geneva, the CARICOM Caucus in London and other partners to increase participation in the HRC.

8. Ensure the sustainability of the Trust Fund

(a) Encourage the Trust Fund Secretariat to:

i. Consider convening up to two donor pledging events per year, one in New York and one in Geneva, to sustain political and financial support for the Trust Fund;

ii. Work with the HRC President, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Small States Office in Geneva and relevant regional bodies, to develop an annual advocacy campaign focused on LDCs and SIDS, supported by a dedicated communication strategy and the use of social media, testimonies from former beneficiaries of the Trust Fund, high-profile advocates and human rights ambassadors, to amplify the Trust Fund's message, promote the relevance of the Human Rights Council's work and keep the Trust Fund visible to key stakeholders throughout the year.

iii. Launch the advocacy campaign in the lead-up to the 15th anniversary of the Trust Fund to increase its visibility;

iv. Develop a strategy for the promotion of the Trust Fund in various multilateral and regional fora;

v. Cooperate with the CARICOM Secretariat in this regard.

9. Facilitate Capacity Building through OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office

(a) Encourage the OHCHR CARICOM Regional Office to:

i. Facilitate a 5-day annual capacity building regional workshop for Caribbean LDCs/SIDS that could be held using virtual, hybrid or in-person formats, subject to availability of resources, and tailored to the needs of CARICOM States and the wider Caribbean region to support former beneficiaries of the Trust Fund and other relevant officials from the region in their engagement with the UN human rights mechanisms;

ii. Get inputs from LDCs/SIDS beneficiary States from the region for the development of the workshop agenda and programme;

iii. Provide technical assistance for the establishment and strengthening of NMIRFs in the Caribbean for improved human rights reporting and implementation;

iv. Organize a training session for senior technical government officials in the region (Permanent Secretaries, Directors General, etc.).

10. Transparency and review of Declarations

(a) Encourage the Trust Fund secretariat to provide status updates on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Georgetown and Bridgetown Declarations.