

**Message from the Prime Minister of Belize to the Caribbean
Community on the Occasion of CARICOM's 30th Anniversary**

under the theme:

“INTEGRATION OUR KEY TO PROSPERITY”

The process of integration of the Caribbean Community arose out of necessity. It was a mandate driven by the imperative of our precarious viability as small nations.

In the case of Belize, it was the solidarity afforded by CARICOM which enabled us to successfully achieve our independence and maintain sovereignty over all our territory, despite the territorial claim from our neighbour Guatemala.

Achievement of independence would have been a pyrrhic victory without the resources to ensure economic and social sustainability as a nation. CARICOM and its practical arrangements in respect to functional cooperation and economic integration provide a way forward.

At thirty, we have, as a Community, achieved some major milestones. A regional University of the West Indies that is second to none; the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB); the establishment of the Caribbean Examinations Council; the consolidation of the Greater Caribbean as a zone of cooperation through the Association of Caribbean States; and the imminent inauguration of the Caribbean Court of Justice. But even with these accomplishments, we must accelerate the process of integration through the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

The CSME represents the best opportunity for our continued viability as a Community in a world of globalization and increasing free trade.

Let us bequeath to our youth, a strong foundation upon which to continue the process of integration for the welfare of all peoples of our Caribbean Community.