

(CARICOM Secretariat, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana) United Kingdom Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the Rt Honourable William Hague told Caribbean Foreign Ministers on Saturday that his Government planned to invest 75-million pounds over a 4-year period into development projects in the Caribbean.

Speaking at the Opening Plenary of the 7th UK-Caribbean Forum for which he is co-chairman, the UK Foreign Secretary stated that the investment represented a considerable increase on previous aid budgets and signaled UK's strong commitment to the Region.

"We are one of the few nations in the world that is maintaining its international development commitments at a time of financial difficulty. We will stick to our pledge to raise our aid to 0.7 of GNI, and you will find us a reliable partner."

He outlined four areas - prosperity, security, climate change and foreign policy - for which the funds will be allocated and for which the UK was seeking greater cooperation with the Caribbean.

"The programme focuses on economic growth and jobs, improving security and fighting corruption and combating the threat from natural disasters and climate change," he explained.

In the area of prosperity, Foreign Secretary Hague said that the core task of both regions was to create new opportunities for trade, investment and innovation in their respective economies. In this regard, he stated that he would consider pushing for greater representation of the Region's interests in G20.

"I'd like to see the UK, as well as other partners represented here today such as Canada, the EU and the US, ensuring that the particular challenges of this Region are taken into account," he stated.

The UK Foreign Secretary said his Government would continue to work with the Caribbean to tackle the twin scourges of drugs and violent crime, which affected both the UK and the Caribbean. The details of this cooperation would be subsequently outlined in the Plan of Action - the outcome document - that is to be issued at the end of the Forum on Sunday.

With regard to climate change, Foreign Secretary Hague applauded the Caribbean for the crucial role it had played "in focusing the attention of the international community on the existential threat posed by climate change to small island states," and expressed hope that the Caribbean would continue excellent cooperation on this issue.

The Foreign Secretary also expressed an interest in fostering closer collaboration in the area of foreign policy noting that several political and governance issues have had serious impacts on global stability and prosperity. He singled out Iran and Syria and the Falklands, asserting that as a matter of principle a country should have the right to determine its own future.

"When these issues are discussed at the United Nations and other international organizations, your votes matter and we hope that we can work together more closely and consistently than perhaps we have in the past. We should also strive to get into the habit of more regular discussions about foreign policy issues as a whole, where we value your perspectives," the Foreign Secretary concluded.

Contact: [piu@caricom.org](mailto:piu@caricom.org)  
[caricompublicinfo@gmail.com](mailto:caricompublicinfo@gmail.com)