



Remarks
by the Honourable Daryll S. Matthew, MP
Minister of Sports, Culture, National Festivals and the Arts of
Antigua and Barbuda
CARIFESTA XIV Closing Ceremony
Trinidad and Tobago
25th August, 2019

Salutations

- Hon. Colm Imbert, Acting Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.
- Minister of Community Development, Culture and the Arts. Dr. Hon. Nyan Gadsby- Dolly.
- Other Members of Government and of Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago
- Members of Government of Caribbean Nationals Represented
- Assistant Secretary General of Caricom Dr. Douglas Slater.
- Specially invited guests
- All of the participants of CARIFESTA 14
- The citizens and residents of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Good Night.

I bring you greeting on behalf of my Prime Minister, the Hon. Gaston Brown, and the entire Government and the people of Antigua and Barbuda. I also wish to offer advanced congratulations to you Trinidad and Tobago, on the celebration of your 57th Anniversary of Independence on August 31st.

Over the past ten days the Caribbean descended upon Trinidad and Tobago to exhibit and experience our uniqueness as a people – our Caribbeanness.

As Caribbean people we demonstrated how much we love our beautiful corner of the planet, and we demonstrated that there is no other place in this world we would rather be!

From the Bahamas in the North to Suriname in the South.

From Belize in the West to Barbados in the East.

We came to Trinidad and Tobago and we experienced the pulsating rhythms of the steelpan – the evocative movements of our dancers - the delectable taste and smells of our Caribbean cuisine – our rich history.

We experienced the rich creativity of our designers, musicians, singers and playwrights.

We experienced Caribbean commonality.

We experienced what is meant to be a true Caribbean family.

I believe I speak for all delegations represented here in saying that CARIFESTA XIV was a true success story. You, Trinidad and Tobago, have raised the bar to what was previously considered unattainable heights for CARIFESTA. You have set a new standard that has given us yet another reason to be proud to say that we are from the Caribbean.

I commend the Minister with responsibility for Culture – Hon. Nyan Gasby-Dolly, The Prime Minister - Hon. Keith Rowley and the Government and people of The Republic Trinidad and Tobago for the superb execution of this important Caribbean exhibition.

At a time when there is the perception that many organs of Caricom may not be achieving the lofty goals that were envisioned when they were set, this collective sharing of uniqueness and identity called Culture continues to build bridges over the waters of our Caribbean Civilization, and throughout the past ten days, we as Caribbean people were able to immerse ourselves in

our rich history and commit new energies to the preservation of our culture and the integration of our peoples.

Our Caribbean space is the ultimate melting pot. We are the decedents of Amerindians, Chinese, East Indians, and Africans, and despite our varied ancestral backgrounds, we have integrated to create the Caribbean Man and the Caribbean Woman.

For Antigua and Barbuda's delegation it was the experience of a lifetime and a celebration of Caribbean unity despite our geographical differences. This was demonstrated when the legendary Len "Bugsie" Sharpe joined Antiguan and Barbudan young pannist and arranger Khan Cordice in a rendition of Antiguan and Barbudan classic calypso on the steelpan. This seemingly simple gesture highlights not only master meeting youth, but also a recognition that for our culture to survive and thrive we must be willing to teach and willing to learn.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In two years' time – in 2021, Antigua and Barbuda will have the opportunity to continue the rich tradition of showcasing the Caribbean.

As Sir Edwin Carrington, Former Secretary General of CARICOM once said and I quote:

"CARIFESTA embodies Caribbean integration. It is here that the people of the Region come together; co-mingle, creating one community, one people. That is integration. Further, this event strengthens the bonds between us, displays our creativity and ingenuity and demonstrates to the world the best that this Region has to offer. CARIFESTA celebrates our Caribbean being in a way that no other single event can."

As Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of with responsibility for Sports, Culture, National Festivals and the Arts, the task will be mine to welcome the Caribbean to our shores and further advance the vision of one Caribbean – one people.

My friends, Antigua and Barbuda is the Caribbean. No other country in our region can boast that their society is as cosmopolitan a mix of the Caribbean people as Antigua and Barbuda is. So in fact, we will be welcoming each one of you and others HOME.

For Antigua and Barbuda, the hosting of CARIFEST XV in 2021 coincides with the 40th year of our young nation's post-Independence era. This alignment of stars gives us an opportunity to harness the consciousness of our people and the attention of our collective diaspora to commit to playing a greater role in uniting our people, and capitalizing on our Caribbean uniqueness in establishing our region as an Economic and Cultural Juggernaut .

CARIFESTA XV in Antigua and Barbuda will aim at continuing the long tradition of deepening the awareness and knowledge of our varied visions for a better Caribbean, through the exhibition of the talents and skills of our peoples to each other culturally.

Antigua and Barbuda – The tiny Nation whose strength of character and pride created cricketing legends, Sir Andy Roberts, Sir Richie Richardson and Sir Curley Ambrose.

Antigua and Barbuda - The nation with a people buoyed by the determination to overcome adversity and to succeed as demonstrated by our national heroes Sir Isaac Vivian Alexander Richards, King Court and Sir Vere Cornwall Bird Sr.

Antigua and Barbuda - The land with 365 beautiful white and pink sand beaches - one for every day of the year – pulsating rhythms of steelbands like Hellsgate, Harmonites and Halcyon.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we currently live in an era of extreme uncertainty and great challenges.

However, this Caribbean civilisation does not have a history of succumbing to adversity.

Our Caribbean Experience created a Marcus Garvey, a Bob Marley, an Usain Bolt, a Brian Lara, and a Sir Vivian Richards!!!

This Caribbean Experience created Nobel Laureates Sir. Derrick Walcott, V.S. Naipaul and Sir Authur Lewis!!!

We introduced the world to Reggae, Calypso and the Steel Band!!

If this does not demonstrate the greatness of our people then I do not know what can.

Let us never shirk from the challenges of our era.

Let us never allow ourselves to forget those upon whose shoulders we stand.

Let us never underestimate our ability as a Caribbean people to change the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, pack your bags and book your flights.

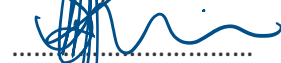
Prepare yourselves as we take another step forward towards the continued development of our Caribbean Civilization.

Prepare yourselves to experience an explosion of history and culture.

Prepare yourselves for CARIFESTA XV in Antigua and Barbuda.

See you in 2021.

Thank you!



Hon. Daryll S. Matthew

Minister of Sports, Culture, National Festivals and The Arts.