



**Statement by the Co-Chairs of the
Every Caribbean Woman Every Caribbean Child Initiative
On the occasion of the Observance of International Women's Day
8 MARCH 2017**

Today, on the occasion of International Women's Day 2017, we join the voices of the global community to celebrate our women and girls, those we have recognized as well as our unsung heroines.

Despite the barriers, women have steadfastly been the agents of positive change in societies, great and small. It was therefore only a natural course that Caribbean Countries were among the 192 nations which ratified the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in recognition of the critical importance of empowering not only women, but also adolescent girls.

The Caribbean is committed to advancing the equality and well being of every woman, every girl, every child. Through its **Every Caribbean Women Every Caribbean Child (ECWECC)** Initiative, launched in 2015, it is committed to reducing teenage and adolescent pregnancy; cervical cancer; mother to child transmission of HIV; and violence against women and children, including human trafficking.

As Co-Chairs of the ECWECC Action Group responsible for spearheading and accelerating this initiative, we congratulate, once again, the First Ladies and Spouses of CARICOM Heads of Government who have agreed to champion this cause and for their tireless work at the national and community levels. We thank them for their proactive advocacy and call to arms to empower our women, girls and adolescents. We thank them for being bold for change.

We express our appreciation and thanks to the CARICOM Heads of Government also for agreeing to be champions of this initiative and the related "activities focused on addressing violence against women and women's and children's health".

We are confident that with strategic partnerships, including the support of our men and boys, a coordinated and coherent regional strategy and our commitment to **#be bold for change**, only bold changes could result.

So on this occasion of international women's day, let us all recommit to our pledge to work in solidarity for the health and well being of our women, girls and children and, in so doing, for the sustainable development of our Region.

**Dr. Douglas Slater, Assistant Secretary-General
Human and Social Development
CARICOM Secretariat**

**Ms. Sheila Roseau, Deputy Director
Latin America and Regional Programme
UNFPA**