



Edwin Wilberforce Carrington

Mr. Chancellor,

I present Edwin Wilberforce Carrington, economist, scholar, distinguished public servant, Secretary General of the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of countries.

Edwin Carrington was born in 1938, the youngest of six children in the serene and gentle village of Parlatuvier on the northwest coast of Tobago. Early promise of academic excellence decreed that he should leave home at a tender age to attend secondary school in Scarborough. In his year he was one of the outstanding students at the School Certificate examination and, therefore, one of a very small number at the Bishop's High School who were expected to proceed to the sixth form. Alas, the circumstances of his family precluded further sacrifice and he was obliged to take up employment in the Public Service as a junior clerk in Scarborough. But adversity lent wings to his ambition and he resolved at all costs to continue his studies. A chance visit to Trinidad on an in-service training course gave him the opportunity to impress his superiors, to the extent that he was singled out for transfer to a post in Trinidad. Once settled, he immediately embarked on a course of study, by correspondence, for the London external examinations at the level of the Higher School Certificate with such success that he earned a Trinidad and Tobago Government Scholarship which enabled him to read for a degree in Economics at the University of the West Indies. Thereafter, his progress was swift, sure and predictable. Success at the Bachelor's degree and a University Scholarship allowed him to continue at Mona to a Master's degree in 1964. It had taken him less than ten years from being a Junior Clerk, bereft of funds and facing the weary journey through the ranks of the Public Service, to blossom as an Economics Scholar looking to a bright future. These years had also seen momentous political and economic changes in the Caribbean.

A Canadian Government Fellowship in 1965 took him to Mc Gill University for a three-year stint of research in Development Economics, but he returned to the Caribbean in 1969 to join the staff of the UWI Institute of Social and Economic Research, as Junior Research Fellow. This was the final preparation for a career as an international public servant, on which presently he was to embark. His first appointment was to the post of Chief of Economics and Statistics at the CARICOM Secretariat in Guyana soon to be followed by promotion to Director of Trade and Integration Division, a post in which he served with such distinction that he was clearly earmarked for bigger things. Under the dedicated leadership of William Demas, he pounded the corridors of CARICOM, urging the case for greater economic integration, and developing a passionate interest in the problems of the so-called Less Developed Countries (now known as OECS). So enthusiastic was he with them and they with him, that many, not knowing him well, were curious about his true nationality.

He participated, as a CARICOM representative, in the negotiations of the first Lomé convention in 1975, so that when the Secretariat of the ACP group of countries was established after the signing of the Georgetown Agreement, he was a logical choice for the post of Deputy Secretary General. For the next nine years he bent his considerable managerial skills and prodigious energies to the establishment of the ACP group as a meaningful instrument for improvement of economic cooperation

and the trading positions of the ACP countries with the EEC. Despite solid accomplishments, it was a frustrating task, handicapped by the limitations of the Secretariat in taking initiatives, in representing the Group and especially in respect of adequate funding and staff for its proper functioning. This state of affairs was still very much in evidence on his elevation to the position of Secretary General of the organisation in 1986.

Edwin Carrington is unashamedly a pragmatist, but brought from his work with CARICOM, a vision of the real potential and importance of the ACP Group as an instrument for the social and economic transformation of its Member States. He sees the establishment of regional co-operation and integration schemes as one of the most important mechanisms for achieving international cooperation. His work in developing the ACP Group taken together with his contribution to the development of CARIFTA/CARICOM mark him out as an outstanding figure of the contemporary Caribbean.

We are conscious that our hopes for survival in the Caribbean depend heavily on the human factor – on personal sacrifice, thrift, and above all, the development of a deep sense of individual social responsibility – qualities of which Edwin Carrington's career is a shining example.

In 1987 in recognition of his long and meritorious service in the field of Public Service he was awarded the Chaconia Medal Gold by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

On this important occasion of our fortieth anniversary, we too seek to add his name to our roll of honour.

Mr. Chancellor, I request you, by the authority of Senate and Council, to admit Edwin Wilberforce Carrington to the degree of Doctor of L a w s, honoris causa.