

**REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CARICAD ON THE OBSERVANCE OF
PUBLIC SERVICE DAY, TUESDAY, JUNE 23rd, 2020**



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Greetings from the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) as we mark Public Service Day, on Tuesday, June 23rd, 2020.

On December 20th, 2002, the General Assembly of the United Nations designated that date as Public Service Day. The day was officially launched in 2003.

UN Public Service Day celebrates the value and virtue of public service to the community; highlights the contribution of public service in the development process; recognises the work of public servants and encourages young people to pursue careers in the

– United Nations

We are marking the occasion in 2020 under some of the most challenging, demanding and uncertain realities that the public sectors in the Caribbean have ever faced. The Novel Coronavirus Pandemic and the global COVID-19 crisis created a new reality for all of us as public officers, whether national, regional or international. The Novel Coronavirus impacts every level of life and work, from the individual, to the family, the organisational, the communal, the national, regional and international. Our traditional essential services were called upon to deliver services that are as close to normal as are consistent with the level of risk from the virus. We acknowledge that the concept of essential service was expanded to include several services provided by the private sector. We commend those workers too.

CARICAD serves 17 member states in the Caribbean. There has been the widespread acceptance of the fact that most of the public sector entities in our member states have distinguished themselves in the COVID-19 environment by their selfless commitment to duty, their bravery and courage and in many cases, their skills and competence. It is easy to single out the Ministries of Health and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the disaster management entity the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) but there was a plethora of agencies that worked not only for the national good but the good of the Caribbean Region. We should also recognise that there is a need for a more robust Information and Communications Technology (ICT) architecture. This need must be addressed with urgency.

In that regard the words of the Secretary General of the United Nations are germane and instructive:

Today, as we honour these essential workers and so many more, we must also reflect on how to better protect, recognise and invest in their well-being as we build back better, together. And I say directly to these inspiring public servants: We are all deeply indebted to you for your remarkable acts of service to humankind. From frontline healthcare workers and public health officials to teachers, sanitation workers, social welfare officers and more, the humble public servant has been thrust into the spotlight, helping elevate awareness and

understanding of the critical role public servants play in everyday life, and in particular during times of severe crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

– UN Secretary-General António Guterres

CARICAD aligns itself very strongly with the sentiments expressed by the Secretary General. Let us all accept that the COVID-19 crisis has given us a new work environment. In times of crisis, especially in small, open, vulnerable economies, the public sector is vital for **Recovery**. An agile public is a major asset. We must do our best not only to face the challenges but to have a mindset which says we must adopt to those changes so that we continue to provide quality services for our people in as safe a manner as possible. In that regard I remind all that CARICAD has already produced a Charter that provides a framework for a harmonised approach to public sector modernisation among Member States. The six Pillars of Governance, Standards, Capacity, Accountability, Openness and Legislation provide a platform for all of us. We have also produced a Template for Business Continuity in the context of COVID-19.

I invite all public officers to be values-led and knowledge-based as you continue to do the right things for the right reasons. Let us use Public Service Day 2020 to re-commit ourselves and our work to:

- More consistent application of ethical principles in the delivery of public services
- High standards of accountability in all our services
- Openness and transparency in the management of human resources
- Greater efficiency and effectiveness
- Optimising the use of available resources considering the current national, regional and global economic challenges

I pledge the continued support of the CARICAD Secretariat to all member states, regional institutions and strategic partners as we all work together to make our region more sustainable and resilient.

Devon L. Rowe

Executive Director

Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD)

June 23rd, 2020

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Based in Bridgetown, Barbados, CARICAD was established by a decision of the CARICOM Heads of Government and became operational in 1980. CARICAD is the Region's focal point for transforming and modernising public sectors of member states to better formulate and implement public policy towards the achievement of sound governance. CARICAD's focus over the years has been on shaping and enhancing the development and sustainability of strong governance, structures and management arrangements in the Region's public sectors. CARICAD is an institution of CARICOM under the revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. It plays a critical role in supporting the process of regional integration by providing technical assistance to Member States to implement the administrative arrangements for integration.