



Remarks by
Prime Minister Dr. the Right Hon. Keith Mitchell
On the occasion of the
1st China Caribbean Conference on Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Cooperation
Radisson Grenada Beach Resort
September 10-11, 2018

I take this as a special honour that Grenada was chosen as the host of a conference of this nature. I extend a very warm, Grenadian welcome, particularly to our overseas delegates. I encourage you to indulge in some of our local spices while you are here.

Your acceptance of our invitation and your participation here today, signals your resolve to fight corruption and to jointly tackle the issue of cross-border corruption that could undermine good governance, good business practices and general financial services in our countries. It is well known that the issue of corruption has been identified through research as a major factor hindering the development of countries. The individual and collective action we take to combat the vexing issue of corruption can only help to enhance the development of our respective countries and the region as a whole.

We are very pleased with China's participation in this conference. Indeed, President's Xi commitment to fight corruption has been well documented. We have noted that the far-reaching campaign against corruption began in China following the conclusion of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012. The campaign, we are told, was the largest organised anti-graft effort in the history of the country.

In recent years, many of our Caribbean neighbours have worked with Beijing on a number of law enforcement issues, but there has not been a formal framework of cooperation. Sisters and brothers, it is our distinct hope that this conference will establish that framework.

Over the next two days, delegates at this conference will share best practices on mutual law enforcement and security concerns and they will explore specific cooperation instruments and initiatives to enhance law enforcement cooperation and establish networks for information sharing.

Indeed, we can all agree, that corruption impairs social fairness and justice, it undermines the image and credibility of countries and their governments and it hinders economic development and the realisation of sustainable development. In fact, it is well known that when our own citizens think governments are not dealing with corruption aggressively, they tend to perceive that we are also involved.

At its core, corruption undermines the rule of law and marginalises people. It impinges on the very purpose of government – which is to uphold the rule of law and to empower people. Therefore, sisters and brothers, our co-operation on these matters is crucial to all of us, individually and collectively.

People who seek to weave their web of corruption to the detriment of the state and its people, and our prized economic development, must come face to face with the reality that there will be no place to run and absolutely no place to hide.

And so, I trust that we have all come to St. George to be part of this momentous occasion, with an unwavering determination to work collaboratively to safeguard our mutual law enforcement and anti-corruption interests.

This conference is historic but do not let it be the last; it must be seen in the context of ongoing cooperation among all of us. We must appreciate that law enforcement and security are part of a dynamic environment. Every piece of legislation we enact, every regulation we approve, every structure we create, these will be continually challenged by the corrupt few as they find new ways to circumvent established procedures.

It is critical therefore that as law enforcers, we always stay ahead of the game and we maintain innovation and timeliness as key watchwords. Regular meetings of this nature, well help to ensure that we stay one step of the corrupt minds.

For Grenada, we think it is particularly significant that this meeting is taking place only days after our parliament debated a new bill on Mutual Assistance. This will seek to incorporate into municipal law in Grenada, the Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between our Government and the Chinese Government. This treaty was originally signed in March 2016. Through this Act, the treaty will have the force of law in Grenada, providing legal authority for giving legal assistance in criminal matters.

This bill signals an unwavering commitment on the part of the Grenada Government to be a partner to all other nations in this global fight. By bringing this bill to parliament we are reaffirming our long-established stance that Grenada shall not be a haven for those who seek to avoid the long and increasingly inescapable arm of international justice.

We are confident that this conference will achieve its goal – and that we in the region, working with our counterparts, will deepen our cooperation in the area of anti-corruption.

We are very pleased with the interest of China in this regard. We already share a history of cooperation on many fronts with the Government and people of China. And we are confident that these ties will be deepened and broadened, particularly during our discourse over the next two days.

On behalf of the Government and people of Grenada, I once again welcome you all. I look forward to these deliberations – and indeed to a future of continued collaboration, particularly on the matters before us today – law enforcement and anti-corruption.