

BRITISH GUIANA - HON. MRS. JANET JAGAN

Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to take the opportunity of saying how happy I am to sit around the table again with so many old friends whom I met at the 1957 conference. We jointly concluded our work in 1957 in a spirit of friendship and cooperation which I am sure will prevail at this conference. We here have an important decision to make - and I would say we would make an historic decision during this conference. We have to decide whether this organization shall continue or whether it shall die.

The Government of British Guiana is interested in seeing that a successor organization is established. As an internationalist I certainly am in favor of moving forward and establishing a successor organization. In this age of space travel no nation can live in isolation and certainly we of the little territories of the Caribbean can never hope to live in isolation. Therefore, an association of people of the Caribbean in this form is important.

We have observed the offer of the Puerto Rican Government, a very generous offer, to establish the offices of the successor organization in that country. We are most happy to hear that this offer has come forward and we shall give it our support. I believe that it would be a successful change and I am sure that the Puerto Rican Government and its people will prove very excellent hosts for the Caribbean Organization.

I would like to suggest that there is need for care in examining the financial aspects of the successor organization. Each country represented here around this table has overwhelming demands on its own finances. I doubt whether there is one country represented here who could say honestly that each penny in the budget does not count. We all have the ever present problems that exist in underdeveloped territories. We are suffering from the aftermath of the neglect and exploitation existing in Colonial territories and it will take us time and money to rebuild what should have been built many years ago. Every penny counts. We have problems of housing, water supply, schools, public health, sanitation, transport and communication, hospitals. That is why I would suggest that we approach the problem from the fact that each one of us will have to make a financial contribution and would have to contribute - large or small - but it will make a dent in the budget of each one of us. We cannot venture to get up an organization in Cadillac style if we can only afford a Hillman. We have to be careful about that; we have not yet reached the Cadillac style stage. My delegation may later propose the need of a special projects budget to undertake special research projects of common interest to participants as a means of balancing the budget. Perhaps under the heading of voluntary contributions we may hope to arrive at a suitable arrangement.

I would like to see the future development and policy of the successor organization have greater meaning than the present body. I should like to see real Caribbean cooperation, interchange of knowledge and greater understanding among the people of this area. I wish to just pose this suggestion which may not

have much support. I notice that Mr. La Corbiniere made a somewhat similar suggestion at the second meeting of the Ad Hoc meeting for the Revision of the Agreement in which he did suggest that in future this organization might embrace a larger number of territories and become more of a real Caribbean organization. We cannot overlook the fact that there are other territories in the Caribbean, Cuba, Haiti and even Venezuela which I feel should ultimately become a part of this organization which has as its base Caribbean cooperation. I also support another suggestion of Mr. La Corbiniere at the 2nd meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee in which he said that perhaps one day there may evolve something similar to the Colombo plan for this area. Certainly we all need help. Our territories are crying out for assistance and we shall have to devise something more tangible to help our backward areas. We come here in the spirit of friends and neighbours and we have confidence that we shall solve our problems at this conference. May the successor organization which shall emerge from this conference be even more worthy of all our support and cooperation than the one that shall end soon.

SURINAM - MR. L.A.M. LICHTVELD

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Government of Surinam, I wish to make a few general remarks in order to make our position quite clear in the very beginning of our deliberations.

The Government of my country is profoundly convinced that a Caribbean Organization, as proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee, not only can be very useful for the area, but is an absolute necessity. Such an organization is indispensable for many reasons, most of which are quite obvious and have already been mentioned here by the Hon. Mr. Bradshaw.

As regards to the past, we fully appreciate the work that has been done by the Caribbean Commission during the last twelve years, and especially the role that the Commission has played in bringing together the populations of the different territories - isolated islands and almost forgotten enclaves on the continent - and by a kind of involuntary, but nevertheless unavoidable categorical comparative in feeding their desire to stray forward, to assume greater responsibilities and to improve not only their economic but also their political status.

When we stress this point, it is precisely because we on the continent, with our specific problems and exceptional destiny have shared less than others in the mass of technical assistance facilities that has been supplied by the Commission up to now.

In spite of our continental position we are fully aware of the value which a continuance of the Commission's work may have, especially when the attention of the new Organization shall also be directed to such fields as have been neglected somehow in the past, and when the new Organization shall improve on the methods employed to serve the area. Consequently our sympathy is directed towards a better-equipped organization with a broader task and a more careful planning of its operations, - and not towards a smaller, curtailed and dwarfish organization. We want something better and stronger than the Caribbean Commission; we do not want a weaker and poorer substitute.

We accept the implications of this desire, in spite of the fact that our country belongs to the poorer ones. The Government of Surinam is fully prepared to bear its share in the burden of such a full-sized Caribbean Organization, albeit within the limits of our possibilities, nevertheless to their greatest extent.