

**Welcome Remarks Delivered by the Honourable Mark A. G Brantley, Minister of
Foreign Affairs and Aviation at the Fourth Meeting of the Caribbean
Development Round Table**

**St. Kitts Marriott Resort
21 April 2016**

H. E. Sir S.W. Tapley Seaton, GCMG, CVO, QC, JP

Honourable Vance Amory, Acting Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis

Members of the Federal Cabinet

Ms. Alicia Barcena, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America
and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps

Specially invited guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a distinct honour for me to deliver welcome remarks at this modest yet auspicious opening ceremony at the Fourth Meeting of the Caribbean Development Roundtable at the St. Kitts Marriott Resort. We are indeed pleased to welcome to our shores colleague ministers of government from across the region, officials of the United Nations, and other international financial institutions on what I would regard as a working visit to our fair Federation!

The topic chosen for this year's roundtable "**The debt overhang: balancing adjustment with sustainable development in the Caribbean**" is particularly timely given the high debt profile of a number of Caribbean countries. It is no secret that high debt burden constrains the ability of government to provide a full suite of social services, such as education, sports, culture, health care, and welfare programmes. Sound debt management principles and prudent fiscal policies are therefore important prerequisites for paving the way to the achievement of sustainable development.

We recognize that the answers to challenges faced in the Caribbean do not reside in any one source. There is therefore wisdom in arranging fora like this roundtable under the auspices of ECLAC to present innovative ideas to address challenges affecting our sustainable development, be they economic, social or environmental in nature.

I am particularly interested in ECLACs proposals for making a debt swap for climate adaptation strategy work for the Caribbean by harnessing green funds to facilitate growth and economic transformation. We are confident that the ideas exchanged in this subject will serve as food for thought which would translate into tangible results.

Fellow Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, it would be remiss of me if I do not avail myself of the opportunity to invite you to partake of some of the beautiful sites and sounds of our twin island federation. I am sure that you will not be disappointed by venturing beyond the confines of the conference venue. By doing so, you will experience firsthand what we refer to with much affection "Two Islands, One Paradise!"

I thank you!