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Closing Remarks

by

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at the

**Eminent Caribbean Jurists Awards 2022
Pioneering Caribbean Women Jurists**

of the

**Caribbean Court of Justice
Academy of Law**

(virtual)

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It is an honor and a privilege for the Caribbean Development Bank to join forces with the Caribbean Court of Justice, two critical regional institutions advancing the Caribbean people's promise and dreams for social, economic, political and judicial development. We are indeed proud to partner with you to recognise the impact, accomplishments and legacies of women trailblazers in our region whose history has been relegated to the margins for far too long.

On behalf of the Bank's President, management, and staff, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to all 34 distinguished honorees. We congratulate the Caribbean Court of Justice, which is led by Hon. Mr. Justice Adrian Saunders and its Academy of Law led by The Hon. Mr. Justice Winston Anderson, and co-convenor of this eminent Pioneering Women's Jurist Project, The Hon. Madame Justice Maureen Rajnauth Lee on this historic initiative.

Today, the world commemorates International Women's Day, recognising the courage and determination of women in positions of leadership and ordinary women who have made significant contributions to their societies. Women make up half of our population, and it is commendable that as development partners, we have taken the time to properly document and recognise Pioneering Women Jurists whose contributions have been felt in every sector, community, and society in the Caribbean and around the world.

While we should be proud of how far we have come, having made significant strides toward gender equality, we must not lose sight of our region's unfinished business. A recent report on the Status of Women, Business, and the Law estimates that 2.4 billion working-age women do not have equal economic opportunity, and 178 countries maintain legal barriers that prevent them from fully participating in the economy.

CDB's commissioned Country Gender Assessments reveal that Caribbean countries face labour market segregation and gender pay gaps, unpaid care, gender-based violence and discriminatory practices that impede progress toward sustainable development. Despite increased participation of women in the legal profession and leadership roles in the Caribbean, the historical gender divide in women's representation in various fields persists. More representative governance is frequently associated with a more diverse judiciary, increasing public trust, and confidence in the state. We have seen legislative and policy reforms in the region, but we must continue to advocate until inequalities are a thing of the past. I am also pleased that CDB, the Caribbean Court of Justice, and other regional mechanisms are at the forefront of societal change as champions of human rights protection and sustainable development.

Our revised Gender Equality Policy and Operational Policy reaffirms the Bank's commitment to gender equality. Promoting gender equality and women's representation in public institutions, such as the judiciary is unquestionably enshrined in the charters of our regional institutions and is central to our efforts to transform our region's trajectory.

This evening, we are proud; we raise our voices in unison to express our gratitude to all our awardees for laying the groundwork;- for your sacrifice, commitment, passion, and selflessness, which transcends time and space, and will be felt by future generations. We are a region indebted to you, strengthened by you, and inspired to continue to serve courageously because of you. We salute you! Happy International Women's Day!