



Partnerships for Resilient Prosperity
Mr. Isaac Solomon
President (Ag.)

Good morning to all our guests joining us today, both virtually and in person.

At CDB, we are privileged to contribute to development. Witnessing the positive impact of our work in Caribbean communities and hearing words like "this road or this school has made things better for us", is incredibly inspiring. The support and collaboration of our partners and the dedication of our hardworking staff is driving transformation in economies and societies across the Region. Yet we know we must redouble our efforts to continue to deliver in this rapidly changing environment.

Even as we speak, the window for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs, is narrowing rapidly. Here in the Caribbean, our progress is under threat because of the combined impacts of climate change, geopolitical conflict, threats to food and energy security, and economic shocks. With our common future hanging in the balance, the stakes could not be higher. And it is within this context, that CDB continues to highlight the need to build financial, social, environmental, production and institutional resilience capacity in our Borrowing Member Countries. We know we cannot prevent shocks so we must build our capacity to withstand them.

This requires a bold new action plan for our countries to achieve the SDGs which were devised to address common global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, and threats to peace and justice. The SDGs, which serve as a blueprint for attaining and sustaining improved quality of life and better economic opportunities, provide a pathway to achieving resilient prosperity. CDB's responsibility is to accelerate the Region's progression to that desired outcome, and this is how we will do so in 2024 and beyond.

As we pursue economic recovery and bolster resilience, it's crucial to highlight the pressing climate change challenge we confront. Failure to invest adequately in climate-resilient pathways now could lead to escalating climate change impacts and associated costs, already evident in several of CDB's Borrowing Member Countries. This vulnerability today jeopardizes future economic growth, development, and public sector budgets, hindering our ability to adapt to climate change impacts and achieve the SDGs in the years ahead.

The influx of climate finance into the Caribbean holds immense importance for the Bank. In 2023, efforts continued to address the lack of concessional financing, eligibility criteria, and other barriers hindering investments in climate action. Mobilizing highly concessional climate finance from multilateral funds like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Adaptation Fund, alongside blended finance approaches, remains a top priority.

The Bank will continue to finance programmes, technical assistance and other initiatives, and drive policy advocacy for critical sectors, to build resilience in our Borrowing Member Countries. Our success will hinge on consolidating partnerships and finding new collaborators to mobilize resources for sustainable development.

A case in point is our recent designation as a Grant Agency of the Global Partnership for Education, the largest global fund for education in lower-income countries. The Bank has already awarded US \$5mn in grants to support education projects in Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In addition, we are accelerating digital transformation in the Education sector by facilitating the integration of Information and Communication Technologies in education systems and institutions throughout the region.

To build environmental resilience, we will continue support for Climate Action by designing the Climate Change Project Preparation Fund. This will assist our Borrowing Member Countries in identifying and preparing climate change adaptation and mitigation projects.

In promoting energy security, through our Accelerated Sustainable Energy and Resilience Transition framework, which we call ASERT, we will assist countries in establishing regulatory and governance systems to attract more sustainable energy investment.

We will also continue to lead the development of an online Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification system for climate finance. This tool, which is being funded by the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Programme will improve tracking, management, and accountability for climate funds.

In addition, to foster financial resilience, we will continue to promote economic diversity and sustainable trade. To that end, we will manage the establishment of the Blue Co Caribbean Umbrella Coordination Programme, an initiative financed by the Green Climate Fund to support the transition to a low-emission, climate-resilient blue economy across the Region.

Another important priority is to address the roadblocks and bottlenecks that hinder development progress in our client countries. We must deal with these implementation challenges to unlock the full potential of development investments and fast-track the achievement of the SDGs.

This ambitious agenda to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, build resilient capacity and foster resilient prosperity—has its share of challenges. No institution on its own can achieve the mammoth task ahead. Consequently, we must

intensify our pursuit of partnerships that facilitate improved productivity, knowledge sharing, technology transfer and the mobilisation of finance.

In this vein, we have deepened our collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and IDB Invest with a new action plan that will focus on multiple areas including digital transformation, climate adaptation, disaster risk management, and food security.

CDB will also continue to support the Region's Clean Energy Transition, an imperative for mitigating the effects of Climate Change and for Sustainability. The big news here is SURGE, which stands for 'Supporting Resilient and Green Energy' initiative for the Caribbean. This is a 58.5 million Canadian dollars umbrella programme being financed by the Government of Canada to accelerate the adoption of sustainable energy solutions in the Region.

Another significant development is our accreditation as a technical partner of the Global Infrastructure Facility, which will allow us to access funds and expertise for our Borrowing Member Countries to prepare bankable infrastructure projects.

These are just two examples of how the Bank will leverage its leadership role in the Caribbean, and expand its affiliations – with governments, International Financial Institutions, donors, civil society, and the private sector – to enable our Borrowing Member Countries to surmount the barriers to sustainable development.

Finally, as we continue our journey together, we reaffirm our commitment to our partnership with the Caribbean people whom we are privileged to serve. Ultimately, development is about creating the right conditions for you to achieve your full potential, enjoy the highest quality of life and have a secure future. CDB will continue to drive positive change and make a meaningful difference in your lives.

Thank you for your attention. I will now hand the podium over to Mr Ian Durant, Director of Economics.