



Prime Minister Mitchell Wants Broader Task Force to Combat Regional Transportation Problems

ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA, July 05, 2013 - GIS: Grenada's Prime Minister Dr. Keith Mitchell has issued an urgent call for a broader task force to begin combating the region's transportation problems.

Prime Minister Mitchell says, such a task force must include a caucus of leaders of business in the region especially the transportation sector, the airlines and shipping lines, as well as the representatives of trade unions representing workers in the transportation sector.

Addressing CARICOM leaders at the 34th Regular meeting in Trinidad Wednesday, the Grenadians leader said the task force on transportation must be able to deliver results within six months.

"Previous attempted debates on transportation have sometimes degenerated into name calling and blame— but as we sit here today, we will come to appreciate that this tactic has not served us well," Prime Minister Mitchell said.

"This summit may want to consider putting in place a broader task force on transportation that will deliver results within six months".

Prime Minister Mitchell said, that heads need to reduce taxes on tickets so that people can travel easier around the region, thus increasing revenue.

"As governments, the time has also come for us to look at our approach to taxation on travel tickets," Dr. Mitchell said.

"We must appreciate, that in most instances the taxes are so much more than the basic cost of the tickets, thus driving up the cost of intra-regional travel".

Prime Minister Mitchell also suggested that governments review their subvention policies for regional carriers.

"We know and understand, that there is this eternal fear that by doing so, we will reduce the badly needed income to our cash strapped treasuries or airports authority," the Prime Minister said.

"But I firmly believe that if we find ways to get more people travelling around the region, we will in the end, increase revenue, even with lower fees, because of the increased volume".

Transportation was one of the major issues on the agenda of several leaders, including the honorable Kamla Persad Bissessar of Trinidad and Tobago.

Prime Minister Bissessar also issued an urgent call to members to convene a sub-regional meeting or caucus to address the transportation problem that is hindering regional travel.

The heads will deliberate transportation and other regional issues over the next few days of the CARICOM meetings.

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