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PRESS RELEASE

Minister Orlando Habet Chairs CARICOM Ministerial Meeting

Belmopan, March 27, 2026.

Hon. Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Solid Waste Management, chaired the 124th Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) – Environment and Sustainable Development, held in Georgetown, Guyana, from March 26–27, 2026.

In his role as Chair, Minister Habet guided regional discussions among CARICOM Environment Ministers, focusing on practical action to address climate change, biodiversity, ocean governance, and sustainable development. The meeting emphasized shifting from commitments to implementation across member states.

“We are the bridge between global commitments and local implementation,” Minister Habet stated, underscoring the importance of translating international agreements into tangible benefits for communities.

Ministers agreed on the need to accelerate delivery of national and regional climate priorities, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), adaptation strategies, and responses to loss and damage. Strengthening coordination across sectors and integrating climate action into national development planning were identified as key steps.

Improving access to climate finance emerged as a central issue. Ministers highlighted ongoing challenges, such as complex application processes, limited technical capacity, and delays in funding disbursement. In engagement with development banks and climate funds, CARICOM called for simplified and more accessible funding processes tailored to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), expanded technical and readiness support, better alignment with national priorities, and faster, more predictable financing.

Engagement with development partners also highlighted priority areas for collaboration, including biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration, climate-resilient agriculture, food security, stronger data and science systems, and long-term institutional capacity building.

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to protecting critical ecosystems, including mangroves, coral reefs, and seagrass beds, which are essential to livelihoods, coastal protection, and economic resilience in the region. They also stressed the need for coordinated regional responses to shared challenges like marine pollution and sargassum influxes.

Ministers also engaged with representatives of the incoming COP31 Presidency of Türkiye, and the COP31 President for Negotiations, Australia. CARICOM emphasized the need for clear and transparent negotiation processes, full and equitable inclusion of SIDS, and delivery on climate finance, adaptation, and loss and damage. Ministers stressed that COP31 must be an “implementation COP,” focused on delivering tangible outcomes for vulnerable countries.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to strong regional cooperation and unified engagement in global climate discussions, ensuring that priorities of SIDS nations remain central to international decision-making.

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