Regional Directors of Youth Affairs in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) will meet in Suriname for two days on 3-4 November to advance work on putting the Paramaribo Declaration on the Future of Youth in the Caribbean into tangible action.

The Declaration came out of a Special Heads of Government Summit on Youth Development held in Suriname last year January. CARICOM Heads of Government convened the Summit to discuss the seminal report of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development (CCYD) titled Eye on the Future, Invest in Youth Now for Tomorrow's Community. The Report provided a comprehensive analysis of the situation of youth in the Caribbean and made significant recommendations on how to improve their well-being and empower them to seize the opportunities presented within the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

Since then, substantive work has been done by the CARICOM Secretariat in collaboration with a Technical Working Group to craft CARICOM youth development goals as a companion slate of indicators to measure progress on the strategic action plan in order to operationalize the Declaration. The Group has also revised and strengthened the Regional Strategy for Youth Development (RSYD) to give expression to the Paramaribo Declaration.

The Meeting in Suriname - organised with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) - will take the process further by establishing priority actions within the Strategy and proposing guidelines for regional implementation and coordination as well as optimal roles for strategic partners. Youth directors will also discuss the way forward in monitoring and evaluating the progress of implementation, using the CARICOM Youth development goals as one of the guides.

In addition representatives from the UNDP Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) will present for discussion, an overview of the Youth In project and the implementation strategy for the project. According to the UNDP, the Youth-In project has an integrated support approach to address the needs of Caribbean youth aged 15-29. The project strategically addresses human development through linked environmental, economic and social inputs to optimize youth potential and is a welcome response to several recommendations in the Paramaribo Declaration.

Directors of Youth Affairs will also review and agree on their pivotal role in facilitating the
implementation of both the Regional Strategy on Youth Development and the strategic action plan for the Paramaribo Declaration, among other critical functions.