

Closing Remarks by H.E. Mr. Philip St. Hill, Ambassador of Barbados to Cuba,
delivered at the Closing Ceremony for the Diplomatic Academy of the
Caribbean's (DAOC) Virtual Training Module on "Protocol and Diplomacy: A
Guide for the Modern Professional"
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- Dr. Nand Bardouille, Manager of the Diplomatic Academy of the Caribbean (DAOC) based within the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies;
- Ms. Gail P. Guy, Course Lead Facilitator
- Ms. Jennifer Marchand, Course Co-Facilitator
- Participants of this particular cohort
- Friends all

The world that we live in today is sometimes referred to as a ***"global village"***. Given the rapid and increasing development and continuing advance of Information Technology (IT), you can reach your Aunt or your friend in Australia just as quickly as you can your Mom at home or your conventional neighbor a few

houses or blocks away. The capacity for immediate responses to e-mails, the instant creation of groups for business meetings through such platforms as “Zoom” as well as family celebrations, supported by live images and instant interactions through “WhatsApp”, all justify the world’s comparison with that of a village.

We who were born and raised in traditional villages know of the strong connections we have with those within our households as well as with the neighbours within the radius of our community and a little beyond. We know each other by name, we know the history and the struggles of each other because we have daily similar experiences. Basically, we see ourselves as family and are all both faithful representatives and brave defenders of the image and reputation of our respective villages.

Over the last two decades or so (some may say longer), the world has become the village, as indeed the village has become the world. Apart from the fact that all of us rely on the same rain, sun, air and food to keep us alive and going, the current COVID-19 pandemic is a perfect example of the need for common understanding, co-operation and mutual support so that all of us may stay alive. Yet, the current experiences with COVID 19 vaccines revealed some undesirable attitudes and actions that put some villages at great disadvantage while the world, as a whole has more than it needs. These facts aptly demonstrate that there is some measure of disconnect between the world and the villages that comprise it, which ought not to be and must, therefore, be addressed with urgency.

It is this environment in which we currently practice our diplomacy and pursue our foreign policy. However, given the level of dissatisfaction that has been both voiced and publicly demonstrated by villages across the world, we are left with the indisputable fact of the need for changes in the way the world relates to the village and vice versa.

This is the scenario that will confront you as young diplomats as you seek to practise your craft in this era. Differences in race, ethnicity and socio-economic status must now be pushed aside so that adequate attention and resources may be given to the issues and the projects that support our respectful recognition of each other and our joint efforts to vigorously pursue and ensure that justice, equality and sustainability issues become the driving force of our diplomacy and our democracy. As Prime Minister of Barbados, The Honourable Mia Mottley, said in her recent statement to the opening plenary of the COP 26 meeting currently on going in Glasgow, Scotland, ***“The pandemic has taught us that national solutions to global problems do not work”***. The village needs the world as the world needs the village since the interest of both are not mutually exclusive.

There is no one template for solutions to the problems we face. Solutions will come (or not) based on the active exercise of our diplomacy. During this training you would have been exposed to several of the possible approaches that could be taken. You heard from the panel on Monday, for example, about the importance of multilateralism, of the mind-set and character traits you ought to have as diplomats and the advantages that could come from a more scientific approach to our diplomatic practice. The panel on diplomacy underscored the

significance of protocol to diplomatic practice and the maintenance of friendly relations between States and between States and multilateral organisations.

What I want to say to you then as diplomats representing the smaller and more vulnerable countries of the world (in other words the special villages of the world) is that, given our size and vulnerabilities, we must adopt strategies that mitigate our limitations but also push us in the direction of being globally recognized among those whose contribution and importance cannot be ignored. Do not forget or ignore the importance of networking and alliances. Let the interest you are representing or seek to represent be the pillar of your outreach. Do not forget that Foreign Policy is not about just rubbing shoulders with the elites of the world. Rather, it must emerge from very specific choices which we make, based on the needs of our “village” and in collaboration with our regional grouping and those whose interests coincide with ours.

In closing, let me extend my best wishes to you as you continue on this diplomatic path. Make it effective and rewarding. Problems will always arise but you must see them as the stepping stones that take you to the next level as a diplomat and your next stage in the practice of your diplomacy. The world will continue to reflect that “global village” concept. As such, you must remain open to new perspectives and approaches to global solutions. Let your diplomacy show that you are thinking globally as you are acting locally.

I thank you.