
Antigua and Barbuda continues to stand with Cuba for CARICOM-Cuba Day

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Yesterday marked 47 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), member states and the Republic of Cuba.

In a small ceremony held on Friday to commemorate CARICOM-Cuba Day, Minister of Foreign Affairs, E.P. Chet Greene denounced the embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States government.

“In this connection, we CARICOM countries continue to reiterate our call for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the U.S. Government against Cuba. We condemn the current U.S. Administration’s decision to tighten sanctions again our Caribbean sister island of Cuba,” he said, while concretising the stance of solidarity taken by CARICOM member states.

And while noting the resolute decision of CARICOM members to stand with Cuba in rejecting the economic, commercial and financial blockade, Her Excellency Maria Esther Fiffe Cabreja, Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Antigua and Barbuda said: “I am honoured to convey a fraternal message of friendship and solidarity of the Cuban government and people to all member states of CARICOM, and to reiterate the commitment that we made to you at the 6th CARICOM-Cuba Summit held here in Antigua and Barbuda stating that the Caribbean can always count on the eternal friendship, gratitude and support of Cuba.”

CARICOM-Cuba Day, observed on December 8th 2019, is a significant event in the history of

Caribbean relations. It marks the inception of the exceptionally close friendship that exists between member states of the Caribbean Community and the Republic of Cuba.

Minister Greene reminded those present at the ceremony that it was the former Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir Lester Bird, who proposed the annual observance of the 8th of December as "CARICOM-Cuba Day" at the first-ever CARICOM summit held in Havana on December 8th, 2002.

The Foreign Affairs Minister added that many years later, "the CARICOM-Cuba friendship is a meaningful one" noting that "Cuba has advanced the region's social progress and promoted our human resource development."

Today, the government and people of the Republic of Cuba continue to share their invaluable developmental expertise with us. At present, 60 members of the Cuban Medical Brigade have been deployed to Antigua and Barbuda to provide vital health care services to our nationals.

Four Cuban linesmen are working with the APUA, while two Cuban experts have arrived to establish a repair shop for electric transformers. In addition, three Cuban engineers are currently working with APUA in areas such as hydrology and water distribution.

Twenty-four architects, engineers and construction workers are currently working with the Ministry of Public Works, including a mechanical engineer, a highway and bridge engineer, a design engineer, grader operators, a quantity surveyor, and an asphalt specialist.

Additionally, in 2019, thirteen scholarships were awarded to Antiguan and Barbudans in crucial areas such as nursing, obstetrics and medical Spanish.

In recognising the benefits that both countries have derived from their relations, the Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Antigua and Barbuda declared that, "We [CARICOM member states and Cuba] can continue trying to defeat that cruel genocide blockade that the government of the U.S. is imposing on my country."

The most recent blockade by Washington is the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States which, according to Ambassador Cabreja, seeks to "prevent the arrival of crude oil at Cuban ports. The target is to deprive 11 million people of the food essential to life and development."

Other nations across the world have continued to affirm their support for Cuba.

On November 7, 2019, for the 28th year in a row, the entire United Nations General Assembly, gathered in one room and voted overwhelmingly for a resolution against the blockade. The final tally was 187 in favour, 3 opposed (Brazil, Israel, U.S.), 2 abstentions (Colombia, Ukraine), and 1 not voting (Moldova).