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Raul: the 7th ACS Summit Demonstrated Capacity for Dialogue

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Army General Raul Castro, President of the Cuban councils of State and Ministers, said today that the Seventh Summit of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) demonstrated the capacity of the region for dialogue and consultation.

While closing the meeting at the emblematic Palacio de la Revolucion in Havana, the Cuban head of state stressed that the forum showed perseverance in seeking solutions to common problems, and achieved the necessary consensus on sensitive issues of common interest.

He underlined that Cuba, which holds the presidency of the Council of Ministers of the organization until 2017, will continue to exercise this function in order to keep on strengthening it and unite wills around collective challenges.

Raul mentioned that the agreed Declaration of Havana reaffirms the validity of the founding principles of the ACS as a forum for consultation, coordination and cooperation.

He also highlighted the adoption of specific tasks under the 2016-2018 Plan of Action, which includes high-priority issues regarding the strategic priorities of the organization.

He noted, however, that much remains to be done and major challenges ahead will need to be faced, such as threats to peace and security, the effects of the global systemic crisis and climate change.

The Army General reaffirmed the importance of implementing the principles of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by the Heads of State and Government at the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014.

In order to progress in the goals of cooperation and integration, he described, as essential, peace and stability,

the defense of the interests of the peoples and the exercise of sovereignty and self-determination without external interference.

Raul thanked the heads of delegations of Member States of the ACS, as well as Associate States and the nations and organizations acting as Observers present at the Seventh Summit for their participation and contributions, and expressed his hope that all Caribbean countries join this space.

The Cuban president highlighted the work of Alfonso Munera, Secretary General of the ACS, as head of the organization over the past four years, and congratulated Ambassador June Soomer, who will assume this responsibility as of August.

At the beginning of his speech, Raul sent a message of condolences and solidarity to the family of great boxing champion Muhammad Ali, who died yesterday at 74 years of age, and extended his condolences to the people of the United States and the African American community, whose rights the legendary boxer always defended.

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