Solidarity - the cornerstone of transformative change



7th September marks a historic and transformative moment in the history of the Caribbean: the signature of The Torrijos-Carter Treaty marked the end of the Buneau-Varilla Treaty of 1903 which had granted the United States perpetual ownership of the territory of the Canal Zone. The Torrijos-Carter Treaty established 31st December 1999 as the date on which Panama would recover its full sovereignty and governance over the Panama Canal.

Amongst other noteworthy elements related to this significant event is the fact that the Torrijos-Carter Treaty was the result of the support and solidarity that Panama enjoyed from the international community, including Latin American and Caribbean countries – a clear demonstration of the magnitude of what can be achieved when our countries act together in unity and solidarity

45 years after the signing of that Treaty, Panamanians have demonstrated to the world their ability to manage the Canal as well as or better than the North Americans, engendering not only greater benefits to their population but also to international trade which has benefitted from the widening of this major marine route.

In like manner, current stresses, the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation due to the Russia-Ukraine war and the impact of climate change are more than reason enough to recall that there is strength in unity and that this is a Region that, historically, has had to fight for its social and economic sovereignty. It behoves us to recognise that solidarity is the cornerstone of any transcendental change and to reaffirm the vision of the founding fathers of the ACS – that through concerted action, cooperation and dialogue, we can achieve the progress and development objectives that we have set ourselves.