

SPEECH GIVEN BY HIS EXCELLENCY

AMBASSADOR LUIS FERNANDO ANDRADE FALLA

SECRETARY GENERAL OF

THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE ENTITLED

**“Connecting the Caribbean and Central America: Exploring and Seizing
New Opportunities”**

Port of Spain: October 19, 2010

Honourable Kamla Persad Bissessar, Prime Minister of the Republic
of T&T

Honourable Dr. **Surujrattan Rambachan, Minister of Foreign
Affairs of T&T**

Honourable Sr. Stephen Cadiz, Minister of Trade & Industry of T&T

HE Dr Edwin Carrington, Secretary General of CARIBBEAN
COMMUNITY

HE Yolanda de Gavidia, Secretary General of Secretary General of
the Permanent Secretariat for the General Treaty on Central
American Economic Integration, SIECA

Excellencies members of the Diplomatic Corp

Distinguished Angella Persad, President of the Chamber of Industry
& Commerce of T&T

Distinguished Businesspeople

Distinguished members of the press..

On behalf of the Association of Caribbean States, ACS, I thank the Honourable Prime Minister for the occasion of welcoming such distinguished visitors at this venue and for the support of her Government through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Trade & Industry for this initiative to meet prominent and visionary businesspeople from Central America and the Caribbean.

Please allow me to especially recognize the President of the Chamber of Industry & Commerce of T&T, Angela Persad, for her leadership in hosting, planning and preparing this historic business meeting, the first of its kind among Caribbean and Central American nations. Recognition also goes to her dynamic work team that received technical support from the Association of Caribbean States.

Special thanks to the Chamber of Industry of Guatemala chaired by Juan Antonio Busto, for all the coordination needed to promote this meeting among Central American businessmen.

Similarly, I must recognize the ambassadors of Central America and of the Dominican Republic accredited in T&T for the support given so that the businessmen from their respective countries could attend.

The Conference “***Connecting the Caribbean and Central America: Exploring and Seizing New Opportunities***” has convened a select group of businessmen who have distinguished themselves by successfully expanding their business operations in

regional markets in order to share their vision, experiences and challenges in a climate of trust which allows for the creation of new business initiatives and opportunities to deepen the relationship between Central America and the Caribbean Community. In this sense, we appreciate the presence of regional bodies such as CARICOM, SIECA and the ACS, as well as academic business institutions such as the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business.

The relationship between the Caribbean and Central America is steadily developing in the business arena, where there have been cases of investment and the forging of strategic alliances, as well as management of complex operations that have filled the gap and paved the way for increasing the potential for new investment and expanding trade exchanges between both regions.

The Association of Caribbean States is proud to have contributed to this effort in bringing together and providing a better understanding between the peoples and Governments of Central America, CARICOM and the Dominican Republic, which all together represent 20 of the 25 member states of the Association. We await with great interest the outcome of this Conference and we are willing to support any initiative that will lead to strengthening the economic integration and the deepening of regional cooperation.

Thank you.