

# **SEVENTH SUMMIT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES**

## **REPORT**

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### OF THE

### ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES

Palace of the Revolution, Havana, Cuba: June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

#### <JAMAICA>

The Seventh Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the Association of Caribbean States, was held at the Palacio de la Revolución in Havana, Republic of Cuba, on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016 under the theme:

***'United for a Sustainable Caribbean'.***

The Members of the Head Table were His Excellency Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and Ministers of Cuba, host country of the Summit, His Excellency Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Chair of the ACS Ministerial Council, as well as the Vice President of Nicaragua, His Excellency Moisés Omar Halleslevens Acevedo, Vice-Chairman of the Ministerial Council; The Honourable Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda in his capacity as Vice- Chairman of the Ministerial Council, and the Secretary General of the ACS, His Excellency Ambassador Alfonso Múnera.

The Summit was exceptionally well attended, with delegations comprising 23 Heads, 4 Vice Presidents, 15 Foreign Ministers, 6 Vice-Ministers and 6 Heads of Organizations. There were therefore 25 delegations from Member States, 8 from Associate Members, 2 Founding Observers, 16 Observer Countries, 1 Observer Organization and 11 specially invited guests, including one Head of Government.

The List of Participants (**Annex I**) and the List of High Level Participants (**Annex II**) are attached.

### OPENING CEREMONY

The Summit began with the playing of the National Anthem of the Republic of Cuba.

Thereafter, in his opening remarks, the **President of the Councils of State and Ministers of Cuba, host country of the Summit, His Excellency Raúl Castro Ruz**, stated that the purpose of the Summit was for profound dialogue on the theme "Together to confront the challenges of sustainable development, climate change and peace in the Caribbean", aimed at strengthening the organization as a mechanism of coordination, cooperation and concerted action, in accordance with its founding principles.

He extended a warm welcome to the French Overseas Collectivity of Saint Martin as Associate Member in its own right, and saluted the adherence of new Observers Kazakhstan, Uruguay, Bolivia and ALBA-TCP. He further expressed the hope that, in the not-too-distant future, all other the Caribbean territories, including Puerto Rico, could become a part of the Association.

While recognizing the Association's unquestionable achievements, enormous challenges still lay ahead; among them connectivity, the need for preferential treatment to Small Island Developing States, development of multi-destination tourism, with particular attention to diversification, quality, diversity, and training. The President assured that Cuba is especially interested in consolidating cooperation with its Caribbean brothers and sisters in the tourism sector.

The President also made reference to other challenges, viz-a-viz: climate change and rising sea levels; emissions of greenhouse gases, and the need for serious pledges of funds and technological transfer by industrialized nations.

President Castro also highlighted as a priority concern, sovereignty over natural resources, being a guarantee for the future and a source of wealth. He urged fellow Heads not to be indifferent to disturbances in Latin America and the Caribbean which constitute a threat to peace, stability, unity and indispensable regional integration, but to reinforce the mechanisms and precepts contained in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by the Heads of States and/or Government attending the 2nd Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (CELAC), held in Havana in January 2014.

Having regard to Member States' commitment to non-interference, the President reaffirmed his country's unconditional solidarity with the people of Venezuela, with the legitimate government of President Nicolas Maduro, and with the Bolivarian Revolution initiated by Commander Hugo Chavez Frias. He further extended solidarity to the Brazilian people and their Constitutional President Dilma Rousseff. He then proceeded to reaffirm his Government's satisfaction with the progress attained in the Colombian peace process.

He stressed full commitment to support the reconstruction and development of the Republic of Haiti, as well as of the demand of countries of the Caribbean Community to be compensated for the hardships of slavery and slave trade.

President Castro then expressed appreciation to Caribbean brothers and sisters who defended Cuba's founding membership in this united ACS family. Furthermore, for the unrelenting support by every government represented, of Cuba's demand for the removal of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States. He also made mention of the support received at the 4th CELAC Summit with respect to Cuba's demand for the return of Guantanamo.

President Castro then paid tribute to the memory of outstanding Jamaican intellectual, Professor Norman Girvan, an indomitable combatant for progress in the Caribbean, and for regional integration, and a great friend of Cuba, who served as Secretary General of the ACS. He then acknowledged the successful work of Ambassador Alfonso Munera Cavadía in these four years as Secretary General, and expressed satisfaction over the election of Saint Lucia's Ambassador Dr. June Soomer, the first woman to assume this responsibility, and to whom he wished the greatest success.

President Raúl Castro Ruz then pronounced the 7th Summit of the Association of Caribbean State, open.

The complete Address of the President of Cuba is attached as **Annex III**.

**The Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) Ambassador Alfonso Múnera** thanked President Castro and his government for the organization of the Summit, and for their enthusiastic support and leadership as Chair of the Ministerial Council. He expressed appreciation to the member countries of the Group of Three for having placed their confidence in him, and also to all members and associates without whom it would not have been possible to bring the revitalization process of the Association to this successful culmination. Secretary General Múnera stated that it had been four years of intense team-work done with much passion and enthusiasm. As a result, they succeeded in clearing up the budget and finances of the Association, a Secretariat working in harmony with sufficient technological equipment, a consolidated space for dialogue and a set of significant projects in priority areas.

The Secretary General recalled and paid tribute to two crucial events in the history of the Greater Caribbean, which should never be forgotten: the fight for liberty and citizenship which lasted for 5 centuries. Firstly, the extraordinary collective endeavour to overcome the most radical dehumanizing experience of slavery, racism and merciless exploitation. Secondly, the aspiration to achieve a society of free and equal citizens, which has not as yet been fully achieved but, was realized for the first time in the small island of Guadeloupe.

Ambassador Múnera went on to describe the onerous challenges facing the region, economic and financial in nature; structural disadvantages due to size and populations of small islands, and the consequences of the negative impact on the resources of the Caribbean Sea and its inhabitants. Only a united front can overcome, with success, these challenges.

Besides strengthening our cultural ties, the Secretary General posited that it is necessary to continue to construct the synergy and dialogue spaces of all the "Caribbeans" so that work can be strengthened in priority areas: the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea; confronting climate change; increased trade; protection of sustainable tourism; improved connectivity and disaster risk prevention. The Association of Caribbean States is a formidable mechanism by which these goals can be attained.

The delegates then proceeded to the façade of the Palacio de la Revolución for the **Official Photo** of the Summit.

## **I. Approval of the Agenda and Conference Procedures**

The Summit Agenda was adopted as recommended by the Eight Extraordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council, held the day prior, with no amendment. Said Agenda is appended hereto as **Annex IV.**

## **II. Dialogue of the Heads of State and/or Government on the item "United under the ACS to face the challenges of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Peace in the region."**

The Honourable Heads of State and/or Government present at the Summit expressed their gratitude to the Government and to the People of Cuba for their great vision and unyielding commitment of collaboration with their neighbours in spite of the blockade, and recognized the historic moment of the reestablishment of their relations with the United States of America.

Additionally, the Heads of State were pleased with the expert preparation and execution of the Summit, the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting, and its Preparatory Meeting, and continued to note their affection and appreciation to Cuba and the legacy of its Revolution for the Caribbean.

Interventions made by all of the distinguished Heads of State and/or Government, as well as Heads of Delegations were generous in acknowledging the skilfulness, dedication and effectiveness of Ambassador Alfonso Múnera as Secretary General, and his highly specialized team. Also, they recognized the positive effect of the revitalization process of the Association under his leadership, which enhanced greatly both the regional and extra-regional profile of the ACS.

Furthermore, they were all pleased with the good financial state of the organization, as well as the strengthening of dialogue spaces in the Greater Caribbean. For example, they emphasized the results of the Symposium on the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea held in November 2015, and the revitalization of the Caribbean Sea Commission.

Delegations also offered their congratulations to the Secretary General-Designate, Ambassador Dr. June Soomer, and endorsed her as an experienced and capable successor to Ambassador Dr. Múnera. Further, Heads pledged the support of their governments to her as she assumes the four-year mandate to lead the Secretariat.

The Heads of State and/or Government reaffirmed their full confidence in the Association as a mechanism for dialogue, consultation, cooperation, integration and development of their nations and maintained their firm position to continue strengthening and consolidating the Association to ensure its growth. The celebration of this Summit is noteworthy and pertinent.

They expressed their conviction of strengthening and consolidating the Association to ensure its continuous growth. They renewed their commitment to all Caribbean people, emphasizing the importance of revisiting history and being visionaries and pilots; in order to achieve the undeniable principles of peaceful coexistence and self-determination.

Unity among countries of the Greater Caribbean region contributes even more to regional development and to the achievement of a sustainable Caribbean. Unity is not achieved by decree, but is constructed little by little. It understands shared principles, values and precise objectives, and forcibly demands a commitment to obtain concrete milestones.

Additionally, the ACS has ample potential and capacity to generate authentic transformations. Even though the region faces great challenges, viz-a-viz: economic and financial vulnerabilities; the grave and unique challenge of climate change; not to mention the necessity to protect one's sovereignty, this organism provides the window of opportunity to share common experiences from different perspectives. Enhancing and reaffirming initiatives in early alert systems, inclusion and strategic intelligence, as well as strengthening of interregional and global relations are essential for full progress of nations to be achieved. The new regional paradigm has as its main focus, solidarity.

Her Excellency Ms. Aline Hansen, President of the Collectivity of Saint-Martin, expressed great pleasure at its adhesion as Associate Member, and urged, inter alia, that sustainability of the Caribbean territory must be guaranteed and that:

"Joining the ACS is now a reality. It affirms the human, geographic and economic evidence which seals our belonging to the Caribbean basin".

The Secretariat would have wished to annex the full Speeches to this report made by all Heads of State and/or Government. However, those received thus far from Saint-Martin, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, Martinique and Colombia, are enclosed herewith as **Annexes V-a, V-b, V-c, V-d, V-e and V-f**.

### **III. Adoption of the Declaration and Plan of Action of Havana**

Following their consideration of the Draft Declaration and Plan of Action, which had been assessed and amended according to Members' comments from the Preparatory and Extraordinary Ministerial Meetings, Heads of State and/or Governments unanimously approved the 44 Point Declaration and Plan of Action for the period 2016-2018 of Havana.

These are appended hereto as **Annex VI** and **VII** respectively.

After the approval of the Declaration of Havana, the **Delegation of France** formulated the following interpretation with respect to said Declaration:

*"France has the intention to commit itself to work with their Caribbean associates in order to achieve the objectives of the Declaration of Havana, respecting their constitution and in agreement with their international commitments, above all their European commitments, and without affecting the defence of their vital interests".*

Also adopted by consensus were the Communiques entitled:

*Special Communiqué congratulating and in appreciation to Secretary-General Alfonso Múnera Cavadía for his successful work; and*

The *Special Declaration* in support of Initiatives for National Dialogue in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. President Nicolas Maduro branded this communiqué as tremendous, urging that "Chavez's legacy continues with our solidarity".

These are appended as **Annex VIII** and **IX** respectively.

#### **IV. Closing Session**

His Excellency the President of Cuba gave closing remarks which are appended hereto as **Annex X**.

These were followed by a brief acknowledgment by Secretary General Alfonso Múnera who indicated that with this 7<sup>th</sup> Summit of the ACS, the organization has been consolidated and revitalized. He reiterated his appreciation to all for their support over his term.

A Press Conference was then offered by the Honourable Ambassador Manuel Aguilera de la Paz, Director of Latin America and the Caribbean in the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba and His Excellency Ambassador Alfonso Múnera.