



# EXAMINE IMPACT

**ACTING Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Christopher Sinckler, is suggesting that the region seriously consider the potential implications that can arise from economic exploits in the waters of the Caribbean Sea.**

Speaking yesterday morning

at the opening ceremony of a consultation on the Operationalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) held in the Shell Suite of the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, Sinckler, using the example of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, noted that such activities have the potential to not only affect

the region in a positive way, but a negative way as well.

"That has reinforced to me that the tragic circumstances which have been unfolding before our very eyes, can in fact have an immediate and long-term dire consequence for the Caribbean region and therefore if nothing else, as we pursue other avenues of economic

opportunity, such as drilling for oil offshore, running natural gas pipelines from Trinidad right up the region to Dominica and even further, [it is necessary] that we take pause to consider very seriously the potential implications such activities can have on the development of the region," he said.

Making reference to the

Association of Caribbean States' (ACS) pursuit of a special area designation for the Caribbean Sea, Sinckler noted that while it is unlikely that that designation will be granted this year, members of the Commission remain committed to the multilateral process, and in particular the

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## Protecting C'bean Sea in everyone's interest

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work required to clearly outline and articulate the nature and implications of the special area designation required.

"The convocation of this technical consultation reinforces ACS Member States' commitment to this process, including through working assiduously to outline the Commission's structures and work programmes – all necessary to facilitating a functional and effective CSC.

"Our goal, therefore, over the next three days is to advance this important process and, in particular, to exchange ideas and foster feedback on a common vision for the CSC within the context of ocean governance in the wider Caribbean region. It is these structures to be articulated and deliberated here, that will aid ACS Member States in formulating an integrated management framework for the Caribbean Sea, and ultimately provide the basis on which special recognition and treatment can be afforded to this marine body," he said.

To that end, he said, there is a need for synergies and mutual respect among all parties engaged in efforts to preserve and promote the Caribbean Sea, and he added they

should also reflect very seriously on the fact that the Caribbean Sea has now become the hub of a major form of commercial activity – the illicit trafficking of drugs.

As such, he noted, the issue of the security of the Caribbean must become central in order to protect what is above and below the waters of the Caribbean.

The Minister maintained that this endeavour by the Commission is not simply a political pursuit. Rather, he explained, the Caribbean Sea and the initiative to protect it belongs to all Caribbean people, as well as those who share it and are interested in protecting the Caribbean Sea.

"To the extent that our various islands are territories divided by water, they are also brought together by the Caribbean Sea. It is on this basis, therefore, this pillar of regional identity, co-operation and integration, that we must urge all here today and within earshot of our words to focus our various resources collectively, our diverse human, technical and financial assets together with those of the international community, to elaborate a structured mechanism [that is] sufficiently robust and fully empowered to lead the way to safeguarding our common patrimony," he said. (JRT)