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ADD: BRATHWAITE APPOINTED AG UNTIL AUGUST 30 - 1

The official stated that since “the Constitution does not allow for the same person to be both Prime Minister and Attorney General, Mr. Stuart has relinquished the portfolios of Attorney General and Home Affairs for the period he is acting as Prime Minister.” Consequently, Mr. Brathwaite will also serve as Attorney General for the same period.

Mr. Stuart is currently leading the Barbados delegation at the 31st Meeting of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in Jamaica. He returns home tomorrow evening. In his absence, the Hon. Ronald Jones has been acting Prime Minister. **(BGIS)**

NO: 1024/10

REGION URGED TO PROTECT CARIBBEAN SEA

International and regional experts have been urged by this country’s Acting Foreign Minister to work closely together in an effort to strategise a way forward to preserve and promote the Caribbean Sea.

Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Christopher Sinckler, made this call today as he addressed a **Regional Experts Consultation on Operationalisation of the Caribbean Sea Commission**, at the University of the West Indies (UWI) Cave Hill Campus.

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He said: "It must be understood that in addition to assistance of the international community, Caribbean efforts are also required to protect its common patrimony."

Minister Sinckler told those gathered at the opening ceremony that the overall aim of this meeting was to exchange ideas and foster feedback on a common vision for the Caribbean Sea Commission within the context of ocean governance in the Wider Caribbean Region.

"It is these structures to be articulated and deliberated here that will aid the Association of Caribbean 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.

While noting that the range of participants represented at the meeting reflected the breadth of interest and work currently involved in marine governance in the wider Caribbean, the Foreign Minister told stakeholders that their participation in the consultation carried with it the opportunity to reach and garner broad-based support for the Caribbean Sea Initiative.

"...as you take back valuable knowledge shared over the next few days to your various constituencies, such support is vital to the ownership and commitment required by Caribbean people to advance this initiative. The Caribbean Sea belongs to the Caribbean people.

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“To the extent that our various islands and territories are divided by water, they are also brought together by the Caribbean Sea. It is on this basis, therefore, this pillar of regional identity and cooperation, that I urge you to focus our various resources, our diverse human, technical and financial assets with those of the international community to elaborate a structured mechanism sufficiently robust and fully empowered to lead the way towards safeguarding our common patrimony,” Mr. Sinckler declared.

Meanwhile, Professor of Gender and Public Policy and Deputy Principal of UWI, Dr. Eudine Barriteau, who also spoke at the ceremony, told participants she expected this conference to produce solutions and strategies for protecting a resource vital to the economic and cultural survival of the Caribbean.

“I am unable, and frankly do not want to entertain the idea of the Caribbean without the Caribbean Sea as we know it. It is an economic resource and geopolitical reality that has defined the contours of our history and is essential to our existence,” she stressed.

Noting that the recent oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico could have dire consequences if it were to happen near Caribbean shores, Ms. Barriteau expressed the view that the protection of our ocean resources was more substantive than hoping we do not experience similar disasters.

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The Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was established in 2008 as a body to promote and oversee the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea. Since its establishment, the Association of Caribbean States and the CSC have been working towards developing appropriate structures and arrangements for the work of the Commission. **(TB/BGIS)**

