

## V SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES COMMENCES IN HAITI



Port au Prince, Haiti (April 24th, 2013) - The Fifth Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was officially inaugurated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Haiti, the Honourable Pierre Richard Casimir, at the Karibe Hotel and Convention Centre, Pétion-Ville, Haiti.

Minister Casimir delivered opening remarks to the gathering, comprising Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, as well as delegations from Founding Organizations of the ACS.

In his speech, he cited that the Summit, the first to be hosted by the Republic of Haiti, is essential in strengthening the regional cooperation relationship, providing a platform for the discussion and implementation of developmental policies and strategies "...to the benefit of all Member States, our peoples and our area."

He alluded to the fact that despite diversity in language, culture and tradition, the Member Countries of the Wider Caribbean region were bound by a shared common objective - i.e. the development of the region, more specifically in the priority areas such as trade, transport, sustainable tourism and disaster risk reduction.

Secretary General of the ACS, H.E. Ambassador Alfonso Múnera and President of the Ministerial Council, H.E. José Antonio Meade Kuribreña, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States, were among those key figures to also address the Meeting during the opening ceremony.

Drawing from the theme of the V Summit, Secretary General Alfonso Múnera expressed in his opening remarks that countries have gathered at the Summit “with the firm conviction that it is worth revitalizing the ACS to serve its purpose as a fortifying agent of the Wider Caribbean in the thematic areas of the Association.”

For his part, H.E. José Antonio Meade Kuribreña stressed the importance of the meeting with the aim of defining a clear vision between the Caribbean and Latin America. He further emphasized that “the revitalization and the desired union for the Association is reflected in the Declaration of Pétion-Ville and the Plan of Action of the ACS.”

Themed “Revitalizing the Vision of the Association of Caribbean States for a Stronger and More United Greater Caribbean,” the Summit is scheduled to conclude this week on the 26th April.

It is expected that after having discussed and drafted the Declaration of Pétion-Ville and the Plan of Action, Heads of State and Government will sign and adopt both documents which is another stride towards regional integration and functional cooperation in the Wider Caribbean.