The Association of Caribbean States Marks 31 Years of Regional Cooperation and Shared Purpose



Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago – July 29, 2025.

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) celebrated its 31st Anniversary with a commemorative reception under the theme "Celebrating the Colours of the Greater Caribbean," held at the Embassy of the Republic of Panama in Trinidad and Tobago, highlighting the cultural richness and diversity of the region.

Today, more than ever, this Association is profoundly relevant. The aspiration that gave birth to the ACS driven by CARICOM and the vision of strengthening ties between the continental countries of Latin America and the island states of the Caribbean—remains essential. This is a region united by the Caribbean Sea, by a deep cultural connection, and by the richness of its peoples.

The evening brought together Member States, Associate Members, Observers, and partners to reflect on more than three decades of advancing regional cooperation and to reaffirm the ACS's role as a unifying platform for the Greater Caribbean.

In her welcome remarks, ACS Secretary-General H.E. Noemí Espinoza Madrid underscored the importance of the Association's mission in today's complex world:

> *"This anniversary is an important opportunity to recognize what we have built so far, and to reflect on how we want to keep shaping our future. In today's complex world, the ACS is more necessary than ever. It offers a space where solidarity and cooperation can be transformed into concrete responses to the crises that affect us daily."*

H.E. Javier Eduardo Martínez-Acha Vásquez, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama and Chair of the ACS Ministerial Council, highlighted the organization's focus on practical solutions:

> *"The Caribbean—rich in culture, people, and potential—must rise as a force for*

cooperation, not division; for pragmatic action, not paralysis; for sustainability and solidarity, not isolation. We are here to build bridges—across languages, across island chains, across continental shores—because our challenges are shared, and so must be our responses."

On behalf of the Embassy of Panama, H.E Diomedes Carles spoke of the symbolism behind the evening's theme. He described the "colours of the Greater Caribbean" as a living tapestry of languages, cultures, and traditions, woven together by history and shared purpose. In his words, the ACS has been a bridge for cooperation and resilience for 31 years, and this milestone is an occasion to look forward to a future that is vibrant, inclusive, and united.

Representing the host country of the ACS Headquarters, Ms. Erica Fortune, Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, reflected on the legacy of the Association and its value to the region. She highlighted the ACS's contribution to strengthening connectivity, trade, sustainable development, and the preservation of the Caribbean Sea, adding that Trinidad and Tobago is proud to continue supporting the Secretariat's efforts to bring the Greater Caribbean closer together.

A symbolic cake-cutting ceremony marked the close of the formal segment, followed by a reception that showcased artwork created by students from St. Francois Girls' College, reflecting the diversity, creativity, and potntial of Caribbean youth.

The ACS remains firmly committed to strengthening unity, resilience, and sustainable development, placing people and territories at the center of regional integration across the Greater Caribbean.