

Joint Press Release on the U.S.-Caribbean Ministerial Meeting

Media Note

Office of the Spokesman

Montego Bay, Jamaica

June 22, 2011

Following is a joint statement of Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, the Republic of Guyana, the Republic of Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Republic of Suriname, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States.

Begin Text:

On June 22, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, the Republic of Guyana, the Republic of Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Republic of Suriname, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Secretary of State of the United States of America, met in Montego Bay, Jamaica to reaffirm the Caribbean-U.S. partnership in several key priority areas. The meeting addressed the common challenges as outlined a year ago in Bridgetown, Barbados and served as an opportunity to review the progress made in the past year, and discuss the road forward.

In a spirit of partnership and mutual respect, a broad range of issues impacting their countries were discussed, including regional security, economic development, social inclusion, energy, food and nutrition security and climate change. The United States and Caribbean countries reaffirmed a shared commitment to work together through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) partnership to reduce illicit trafficking in drugs, small arms and ammunition, increase public safety and security, and promote social justice. Since the June 2010 Bridgetown meeting, CBSI partners have concluded a series of technical working groups and collectively identified several key security priorities. The United States and the Caribbean have made progress in remedial education and jobs skills training for youth, juvenile justice reform, anticorruption, border security, prison reform, police professionalization, regional data sharing, drug demand reduction, and maritime interdiction capacity – all priorities identified by the CBSI partnership. They have had discussions on the issues of repatriating criminal deportees to their home countries and note the need to continue addressing these issues. The participants look forward to further progress in addressing identified priorities as they prepare for the upcoming Second Annual Dialogue on regional security issues in November in The Bahamas.

The participants reaffirmed their solidarity with the people of Haiti and their commitment to supporting Haiti in its reconstruction efforts and the strengthening of its institutional and human capacity in furtherance of its sustainable development.

The United States and the Caribbean are also cooperating under the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy poverty, and climate change. The U.S. Secretary of State announced projects that will receive clean energy technical assistance under the Advancing Sustainable Energy Solutions in the Caribbean Initiative and the Caribbean Climate Change Adaptation Initiative, which partners with the University of the West Indies with U.S. universities through U.S. partner Higher Education for Development to enhance research and promote outreach to policy-makers on climate change adaptation. They will work together toward a successful outcome at the climate negotiations in Durban that builds on Cancun. The United States and Caribbean countries recognized that enhancement of growth and economic development of the Caribbean would contribute to improving the international competitiveness of those countries, as well as to achieving their objectives of improved standard of living, job creation, and social stability. They therefore agree to work together to achieving these objectives. The United States and the Caribbean countries also discussed the regions vulnerability to natural disasters and the need to continue cooperating on those issues. They also took note of the extension of the CBTPA and the possibility which it holds for Caribbean exports through increased production and productivity.

The participants also recognized the civic and cultural contributions of the Caribbean diaspora highlighted during Caribbean-American Heritage month in the United States. They noted the Caribbean diaspora's connections to their communities in the Caribbean and considered ways to engage those communities in solving shared problems. On May 17, 2011, the U.S. Secretary of State announced the launch of the International Diaspora Engagement Alliance, or IDEA. This public-private partnership will provide a platform for the private sector, public institutions, and diaspora organizations to coalesce and work together on issues of common interest. Building upon the contributions of the Caribbean diaspora in the U.S. and the launch of IDEA, the U.S. Secretary of State announced the Caribbean IDEA Marketplace, a business competition platform being developed in partnership with public and private institutions to challenge global Caribbean diaspora business and social entrepreneurs to generate innovative projects that will stimulate employment and economic growth in the region.