



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

## Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs

### MEDIA RELEASE

### 8<sup>TH</sup> CARICOM-CUBA SUMMIT

#### PORT OF SPAIN: 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2022

CARICOM and Cuba celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations at the 8<sup>th</sup> CARICOM-Cuba Summit held in Barbados on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2022. Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, attended the Summit on behalf of Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Three major decisions were taken during the Conference. In particular, CARICOM invited Cuba to join CARICOM's Special Ministerial Task Force on Agriculture. The Special Ministerial Task Force was established in order to address the region's rising food import bill and is tasked with reducing it by 25% by the year 2025. It is proposed that Cuba will share technological knowledge through the Task Force with CARICOM. It is envisaged that this mutually beneficial arrangement, which will entail Cuba sharing technological knowledge and the establishment of a food terminal to facilitate the steady supply of food items to Cuba, will redound to the benefit of both parties.

Cuba has also proposed an expansion in their offer of scholarships and medical cooperation in the Health sector to CARICOM States. In particular, efforts to address non-communicable diseases, particularly diabetes, will be targeted throughout the region.

Both sides also agreed to observe 6<sup>th</sup> October as CARICOM-Cuba Day Against Terrorism in honour of the 73 individuals who were killed when the Cubana Airlines Flight 455 was bombed on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1976. The Government of Barbados hosted a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Cubana Monument in Paynes Bay, St. James, Barbados, constructed in 1998 to honour those who passed away in the tragic incident. His Excellency Miguel Diaz-Canel, President of the Republic of Cuba, in his remarks delivered during the ceremony, paid homage to the victims of the attack, noting that some family members had journeyed to Barbados for the event. Minister Gopee-Scoon, in her remarks delivered at the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Monument, said that the bombing was a "defining moment in CARICOM-Cuba relations" that served to bring "our people together in solidarity against the killing of civilians in a cowardly act of terror." She also reaffirmed that the ensuing years have served to strengthen diplomatic relations between Cuba and the region as a whole, noting that the incident did not deter or divide CARICOM from our Cuban brothers and sisters.

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On 8<sup>th</sup> December, 1972, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Guyana and Jamaica established diplomatic relations with Cuba. CARICOM-Cuba Day is celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> December annually as a result. These four (4) Caribbean countries joined Mexico as the only countries in the Western Hemisphere to maintain diplomatic relations with Cuba at that time.

Please see the link to the CARICOM Website for the Bridgetown Declaration signed at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> CARICOM-Cuba Summit:

[The Bridgetown Declaration – Eighth CARICOM-Cuba Summit, Bridgetown, Barbados, 6 December 2022 - CARICOM](#)



Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, addressing the CARICOM-Cuba Summit on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

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Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon, Minister of Trade and Industry, delivering remarks at the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the monument erected in honour of those who lost their lives in the bombing of flight Cubana Airlines Flight 455 on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1976.

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The Honourable Mia Mottley, prime Minister of Barbados as she addressed the gathering at the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the monument erected in honour of those who lost their lives in the bombing of flight Cubana Airlines Flight 455 on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1976.

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