

# *For a united Caribbean*

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By María Josefina Arce

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Dialogue, integration and genuine cooperation are an indissoluble part of the excellent relations, which are reaffirmed daily and in every meeting between the authorities of these nations.

Today, the Eighth Cuba-Caricom Summit opens its doors in Barbados, another opportunity to review existing agreements and consider new actions that will benefit the Caribbean peoples.

This meeting is of special significance as it takes place on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, on December 8, 1972, between the Greater Antilles and the first four independent territories of the English-speaking Caribbean: Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

It will also take place within the framework of the twentieth anniversary of the CARICOM-Cuba Day, which the Havana Summit in 2002 agreed to celebrate on December 8, in recognition of the courageous and sovereign attitude of these nations.

The Havana meeting, 20 years ago, was the first between our country and its Caribbean brothers. Each of the meetings held so far, seven in total, have been a reaffirmation of how much can be done, if there is political will, respect and desire to work for the common welfare.

The various editions have insisted on the deepening of ties in different areas. Regional leaders have pledged to diversify economic and trade links, improve air and maritime connections, as well as continue to expand exchanges on environmental issues, in view of the common challenges posed by climate change.

At the last meeting, in 2020, held virtually through COVID 19, the need to continue promoting sustainable tourism as a fundamental element for the economic development of the Caribbean was emphasized.

These meetings, at the highest level, have also reaffirmed the importance of defending regional unity to preserve peace and stability in the Caribbean nations, while invariably condemning the criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against the Cuban people.

The sustained cooperation between Cuba and CARICOM in areas such as health, education, human resources training and the reduction and mitigation of the risk of natural disasters has also been highlighted.

This new meeting between the Caribbean brothers will result in the consolidation of historic ties and the search for new alternatives to build more inclusive, just and equitable societies.

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