

# *A tour for friendship*

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**Díaz Canel at the inauguration of the Colloquium for 50 years of CARICOM-Cuba relations, at the University of the West Indies.**

By María Josefina Arce

Initiated in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Cuban President Miguel Díaz Canel's tour of the Caribbean, which has also included Barbados and Grenada, has once again evidenced the special bond that unites us and the willingness to continue expanding cooperation based on solidarity and collaboration.

Respectful and exemplary, this is how Díaz Canel described the relationship between our country and Barbados, where in addition to participating in the recently concluded Eighth Cuba-Caricom Summit, he made an official visit, with fruitful results.

Barbados was one of the first four English-speaking Caribbean territories that, after its independence, defied U.S. pressures and established diplomatic relations with Havana on December 8, 1972, which is precisely why today we are celebrating CARICOM-CUBA Day.

We are also linked to that sister country by a painful page in our history, the terrorist attack on October 6, 1976 against a Cuban commercial airliner, which fell into the waters of Barbados and in which 73 people lost their lives.

The conversations with the highest Barbadian authorities reflected the willingness to continue advancing in bilateral ties, beyond health and sports, where there is a solid collaboration, in addition to the fluid dialogue between both governments.

Thus, the two parties agreed to take advantage of all the existing potentialities in tourism, agriculture, environment and education, with the preparation of language teachers and the granting of scholarships.

Grenada has been the third and last destination, and it is also the first visit made by the President to that Caribbean island, where in 1998 the historic leader of the revolution Fidel Castro unveiled at the Maurice Bishop International Airport a plaque in memory of the 24 Cubans killed in combat during the U.S. invasion of 1983.

Collaboration with this nation is currently being developed, mainly in the construction and health sectors.

During the official talks it was agreed to expand the exchange in agriculture, health, education and climate change.

Díaz Canel thanked the three countries for their support to the struggle of the largest of the Antilles against the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States for sixty years, which causes suffering to Cuban families and hinders our development.

The Cuban president's tour is undoubtedly a boost to the ties of friendship existing between Cuba and its Caribbean neighbors, in addition to representing an opportunity to continue diversifying cooperation.

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