

# *St. Vincent and the Grenadines at the helm of CELAC*



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By María Josefina Arce

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This was one of the agreements reached at the Seventh Summit of heads of state and government of the bloc, held in the last few hours in Buenos Aires, and which supported the designation of the Caribbean nation to succeed Argentina as pro tempore president, which held the presidency in 2022.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines thus becomes the second Caribbean country to hold this position. Cuba was the first to hold the presidency of the mechanism for dialogue and political consultation from 2013 to January 2014.

The San Vincentian prime minister, Ralph Gonsalves, has expressed his intention to give a boost to the actions of Mexico and Argentina to revitalize the integrating mechanism, so necessary in current times.

Gonsalves is an advocate of multilateralism and cooperation among countries to face the challenges the region faces today in the economic and social spheres, in view of the difficult situation generated by the COVID 19 pandemic, which has deepened inequalities.

But the political challenge is also great, given the attempts, as Gonsalves has denounced, by the United States to halt the progress of CELAC and to sustain the OAS, the Organization of American States, which it controls and has used for its hegemonic interests.

An OAS sadly known in the continent for its support to destabilizing actions against progressive governments and even coups d'état.

The designation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is a new recognition of its work at the international level. We recall that in 2019 it was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the period 2020-2021.

In addition, in the last half of 2020 it assumed the presidency of CARICOM, Caribbean Community, from which it continued to promote solidarity, integration of the area and the right of each people to build their future.

The truth is that the Caribbean, as a whole, has maintained a firm position in favor of unity, cooperation, without conditions, and against interference in the internal affairs of nations such as Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Bolivia.

The Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines expressed his gratitude for the election and affirmed that he will work with everyone to move CELAC and its relations with other blocs forward in the face of shared priorities such as the fight against climate change, food security, health and migration.

There are many challenges for the small Caribbean nation, but it can count on the experience and internationally recognized leadership of Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves.

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