



# Perspectives on relations with the Caribbean

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The nature of the entire integration process is the intertwining of political, social and economic interests

The General Secretariat of SICA is a Founding Observer of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), which has made it possible for relations to be maintained and expanded between both regions. This relationship enjoyed new stimulus following the meeting convened among the Secretaries of the ACS, CARICOM and SICA on 20th April 2009, in the framework of the 5th Summit of the Americas, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

At this meeting, we decided to promote mechanisms that would allow us to address current issues that are of relevance not only for the Caribbean, but also for the world. We cannot distance ourselves from issues such as climate change, the international financial crisis and regional health and security, to mention a

few of the most important areas of concern.

I would like to touch on one of the above-mentioned issues, namely climate change, and the possibilities created by joint action in what is referred to as the industry without chimneys – tourism. As regards the former, we should acknowledge at the outset that it is a phenomenon of international urgency, which underlines the impotence of individualism. It is as a united front that we will be able to tackle this issue, empowering schemes that would facilitate joint public action that would allow, as so aptly stated in the *Popol Vuh*, the holy book of the Maya, everyone to focus their efforts in the same direction. In the field of tourism, the joint efforts that could be undertaken towards the creation and strengthening of the Sustainable Tourism Zone being promoted by the ACS will prove useful. Included among the potential areas that would allow the deepening of exchanges and cooperation between both regions are the best practices associated with tourist safety, cruise ship activity, quality and training, planning and information systems, as well as policies and mechanisms pertaining to crisis management and natural disasters. It is evident that both of our regions stand to benefit from greater rapprochement through the promotion of Central American and Caribbean capital investments, air facilitations to increase intra-regional tourism and business partnerships.

I will leave for inclusion in a future article the matter concerning the necessary promotion of actions and projects targeting the social arena. Our future lies in poverty eradication, environmental protection, natural disaster prevention and trade facilitation, among others. We have remarkable opportunities to become stronger, if we capitalise on our synergies.

I close by recalling that the nature of the entire integration process is the ‘intertwining’ of political, social and economic interests. If we bring our interests closer, we will enjoy greater integration and cooperation. Let’s get to work! ■



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