

Approaching 22 Years of Excellent Relations Antigua and Barbuda and the United Mexican States

On the 14th day of September in 1984, the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda and the United Mexican States (Mexico) formally established diplomatic relations with a view to cooperate on a wide range of mutual interests. Now, nearly 22 years later, Antigua and Barbuda reaffirms its commitment to the cordial and harmonious relations that exist with Mexico since the establishment of bilateral relations.

The Heads of State and Government of both countries have allowed for the development of strong relations over the years. The Honourable Sir Lester Bird KNH, former Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, had forged strong relations with the then President of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Zedillo. The most recent former Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, the Honourable W. Baldwin Spencer, also forged productive ties with His Excellency Mr. Vicente Fox and His Excellency Mr. Felipe Calderón, during their terms in office. The current administration of Antigua and Barbuda, led by Prime Minister the Honourable Gaston Browne, is in full support of advancing the excellent relations established by his predecessors.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda commends the work of the Foreign Ministries of both countries and expresses its gratitude for the work of various ambassadors, including His Excellency Mr. Lionel Hurst, His Excellency Mr. Colin Murdoch, His Excellency Mr. Anthony Liverpool and Mexican Ambassadors who have served Antigua and Barbuda over the years, namely, His Excellency Mr Hector Manuel Ezeta, His Excellency Mr Sergio Romero Cuervas, His Excellency Mr Jose Juis Vallarta, His Excellency Mr. Benito Andion, Her Excellency Luz Elena Bueno, His Excellency Mr. Sergio Saavedra Melendez, His Excellency Mr. Gerardo Lozano, His Excellency Mr. Edmundo Font Lopez and, finally, the current Ambassador, His Excellency Mr Luis Manuel Lopez Moreno, who continues a strong

tradition of instrumental and productive representation from Mexico. The appointment of Her Excellency Ms. Gail Christian as Non-Resident Ambassador of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Mexican States and the appointment of Dr. Vanetta C. Rodgers as Honorary Consul of Mexico to Antigua and Barbuda is further evidence of the close ties between these two countries.

Cooperation between Mexico and Antigua and Barbuda extends beyond the normal processes of diplomacy into areas of mutual support, namely health, education, human development, and the development and management of local infrastructure.

Antigua and Barbuda enjoys an active and rich dialogue with the Government of Mexico, both bilaterally, regionally alongside other Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and at the multilateral level, for example, in the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the United Nations, and, more recently, in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Mexico has provided development assistance to Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Caribbean region, particularly in the area of capacity building. Over the years, Mexico has awarded many students from Antigua and Barbuda with scholarships in the areas of International Relations, Electrical Engineering and Language Training, among others. It is important to mention that the First Secretary of the Embassy of Antigua and Barbuda in Havana, Cuba, Ms Janelle Matthew, is a graduate of La Universidad de Quintana Roo. Ms Matthew joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda in 2012 and her training in Mexico has benefitted the Ministry greatly.

The Government of Mexico continues to be an important partner in human development, and the most recent cooperation initiative between the two countries is in social housing, with a contribution worth US\$5 million.

When the G-20 was created in 1999, it was hoped that this inter-governmental network would fill the need for an exclusive forum where the authorities of both emerging and developed countries could come together to share their perspectives and build consensus, through this high-level intergovernmental dialogue, specifically around measures for crisis prevention and resolution. Academics and practitioners of diplomacy alike have

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conveyed the argument that creating such an informal forum was in the interest of the G7/8, which understood the need for a more harmonised international economic and financial system which would never work without the strong support of emerging powers, or what the G7/8 countries referred to as 'systemically significant' countries.

In 2012, Mexico chaired the G-20 and also hosted the Summit in June of the same year. By assuming the annual Presidency of the G-20 as the second emerging country to do so at the Leaders' level and as the first Latin American Chair, Mexico sought to confirm its role as a responsible and constructive actor, both regionally and globally. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda takes this opportunity to express its appreciation to the Government of Mexico for its advocacy of the issues of particular significance to Caribbean territories during its chairmanship of the G20, namely:

- Economic stabilization and structural reforms as foundations for growth and employment;
- Strengthening the international financial system and fostering financial inclusion to promote economic growth;
- Improving the international financial architecture in an inter-connected world;
- Enhancing food security and addressing commodity price volatility; and
- Promoting sustainable development, green growth and the fight against climate change.

Antigua and Barbuda joins its fellow CARICOM Member States to engage with officials of the Government of Mexico at the level of senior officials and at the level of heads of state at CARICOM-Mexico Summits. A strong relationship between the Heads of Government of CARICOM and of Mexico was developed in the 1970s under the Presidency of Luis Echeverría. During the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government, held in July 2001, in Nassau, The Bahamas, CARICOM Heads of Government welcomed President Vicente Fox as a special guest. At that Meeting, President Fox proposed several areas for cooperation, including regional security, management of HIV/AIDS programmes and other areas of public health, combating global organised crime and drug trafficking, promoting better coordination for the occurrence of natural disasters, and discussing combating global climate change.

Testimonios

The last CARICOM-Mexico Summit, hosted by His Excellency Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, the current President of Mexico, was a complete success and the Caribbean looks forward to hosting the Mexican President and his colleagues at the next Summit to be convened in Antigua and Barbuda.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda congratulates the Government of the United Mexican States on the many accomplishments of the relations between these two countries. The Government is confident in the future of its relations with Mexico and seeks to advance these excellent relations to a higher level, particularly through the recent successful visit of Prime Minister the Honourable Gaston Browne and Foreign Minister the Honourable H. Charles Fernandez to Mexico in May 2016, and the work of Ambassador Lopez Moreno and the Embassy of Mexico in Castries, Saint Lucia. The future of the relations between Mexico and Antigua and Barbuda is, indeed, full of hope and promise.

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and
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