

## ACS and Martinique make Inroads on Advancing Regional Transport Agenda at the 1st Connectivity Conference of the Greater Caribbean



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Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago - The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Collectivité Territoriale de Martinique (CTM) concluded the 1st Connectivity Conference of the Greater Caribbean today.

During the Conference, ACS Secretary General, Rodolfo Sabonge, elaborated on the work of the ACS towards facilitating stronger transport connections and logistic services throughout the Greater Caribbean: "Transport is a key focus area of our work programme as it allows us to leverage a multiplier effect and progress in all the other thematic areas under the purview of the organisation". He emphasised that trade, tourism, food security goals and the capacity to adapt to natural disasters are dependent on regional transport linkages.

His Excellency Serge Letchimy, President of the Executive Council of Martinique, also cited regional cooperation as a means of survival and underscored Martinique's ongoing efforts to be the first French overseas territory to join the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). His remarks also reflected the human and cultural notions of connectivity between communities in the Latin American and Caribbean region. His Excellency Jean Christophe Bouvier, Préfet of Martinique, also expressed the commitment of France to support and contribute to the development of the region.

The event also served as the backdrop for the launch of the ACS Maritime and Logistics Strategy financed by the Latin American Development Bank (CAF). Since the start of the year, both agencies have been collaborating on the execution of a consultancy targeting the examination of the regional maritime industry as part of a plan to develop a more connected, integrated maritime transport ecosystem in the Greater Caribbean.

The strategy itself focuses on developing and supporting processes that facilitate greater growth and operational efficiency at ports across the Greater Caribbean. It covers all the sub-regions of the Greater Caribbean considering that the issues related to limited transport connectivity cannot be addressed in an atomised fashion. Thanks to the technical and financial assistance from CAF, the

development of this strategy is another step toward addressing regional maritime connectivity shortfalls.

The conference was financed by the INTERREG Caribbean Programme and served as a platform for the discussion of innovative solutions to advance regional development through stronger transport links and regional transport services. Topics discussed included transportation infrastructure, digital connectivity, sustainable energy solutions, fostering greater regional integration, and how the private and public sectors can work together to provide effective solutions.