

## ACS Strengthens Ties with Brazil by Focusing on Transport and Development Initiatives



ACS Secretary General Rodolfo Sabonge held a bilateral meeting with the Ambassador of Brazil to Trinidad and Tobago, H.E. Elisa Teofilo De Luna on 26th March. This meeting, also attended by Chief Executive Coordinator Tricia Barrow, Legal Advisor Natasha George, and Chargee d'Affaires for Trade and Sustainable Development Safiya Reid, underscored the profound political, ethnic, and cultural connections between Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the ACS region.

Ambassador De Luna highlighted the growing cooperation between Brazil and the ACS, marking the beginning with an upcoming mission of ACS staff to Brasilia. Secretary General Sabonge lauded Brazil's unifying influence within the region, as exemplified by President Lula's recent participation in the 8th CELAC Summit. He stressed the foundational role of ethnic and cultural bonds in the creation of the ACS 30 years ago, aimed at fostering sustainable development through a unified approach to addressing common challenges such as climate change, COVID-19, and regional trade and transportation.

A focal point of discussion was the Regional Maritime Logistics Strategy, aimed at enhancing logistical services for effective connectivity within the region. This initiative aligns with the ACS's vision that efficient transport systems are a precursor to trade and economic growth, supporting efforts such as CARICOM's 25by25 Food Security Initiative. Brazil's EMBRAPA was identified as a potential collaborator in bolstering food security through improved transport networks.

The Secretary General extended an invitation to Brazil for participation in the upcoming ACS Meetings in Suriname, proposing the signing of the ACS-Brazil agreement as a landmark event. The meetings in May in Suriname will also commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the ACS, presenting an opportunity for stakeholders to enhance their engagement through contributions to the ACS's cooperation priorities.

Chief Executive Coordinator Barrow noted that the upcoming Meetings in May in Suriname will inaugurate the 30th Anniversary celebrations of the ACS. This is an opportune moment for ACS stakeholders to elevate the profile of their relations with the ACS by making tangible contributions to the cooperation priorities of ACS Members. She further stated that among the priorities and opportunities, capacity building in diverse areas such as diplomatic and language training to technical studies constituted a low-hanging fruit that also had the advantage of fostering interpersonal connections.

Ambassador De Luna expressed enthusiasm for leveraging such opportunities, noting the possibilities afforded by Brazilian public universities and language training for ACS students. The discussion also touched upon the ACS's commitment to mainstreaming women's and youth concerns across all its projects.