



Caribbean American Chamber Of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (CACCI)

National Caribbean American Heritage Month June 2009

Statement by:

Dr. Roy A. Hastick, Sr. President/CEO, CACCI



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President and Founder

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Distinguished Guests, Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps and other Distinguished Invitees:

On behalf of the board of directors, members and staff of the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry, I would like to formally extend a warm welcome to all of you. I wish to express my deep appreciation to all assembled here on the occasion of a celebration of Caribbean American Heritage Month. A philosophic expression by a Caribbean poet states “*To gain a deeper view of the horizon, I leap upon the old wall of the past.*” That philosophic expression exhorted us many years ago to employ our collective experience in creating a future of worth. The Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) solemnly believes that the basis of our purpose resides in the poet’s exhortation and endorses it unconditionally. Indeed, we conceive of this august assembly as a re-affirmation of solid partnership bridging the shores of the Caribbean with its Diaspora Homeland, the United States, whose interactions and relationships with CARICOM remain pivotal to Caribbean future development.

It is within this framework of partnership that CACCI affectionately greets you this afternoon. For us, this is a defining moment of renewing our pledge to continue our efforts aimed at deepening our relations with Caribbean Governments and the Caribbean Private Sector, promoting our Diaspora’s vital interests in the Region, advancing CARICOM’s varied initiatives with the US Administration, and seeking out trade and

investment opportunities in the Caribbean on behalf of our members and other sectors of the US corporate community.

The foregoing is related directly to the growth and development of the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry over the past twenty-four years. Our Chamber has grown from a virtual fledgling micro-organism into a massive, multi-dimensional institution with a solid, unbreakable constituency. Its advocacy of the Diaspora's interests in the USA, its promotion of minority and women's business enterprise programs, and its contribution to the economic development of New York, among other things, have made it the premier Caribbean-American organization in the United States and the quintessential link between the Caribbean Region and the USA. Its "deeper view of the horizon," indeed its larger vision, is manifested in the conceptualization and creation of the soon to be launched Caribbean Trade Center.

The Caribbean Trade Center should be of particular importance to CARICOM Heads of Government and Caribbean officials and to the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO). It is anticipated that the Caribbean Trade Center will become operational within 12-18 months and we welcome the opportunity to continue the partnership with CARICOM, the OECS and with CTO.

In the meantime, CACCI wishes to make public that it stands ready, willing and able to contribute to Caribbean development through the following initiatives, strategies and methodologies:

1. To facilitate various capacity building measures in the Caribbean public and private sectors;
2. To organize practical training sessions with the relevant Caribbean agencies on how to do business with the United States;
3. To arrange in-service training for high-level Caribbean officials to better understand the workings of the New York Stock Exchange, to interact with leading financial organizations such as JP Morgan Chase, Bank of New York Mellon, Citibank and other CACCI member banks to participate in structured dialogue with the US State Department, the Inter-American Development Bank, US Ex-IM Bank and the World Bank, among others;
4. To serve as the Representative of CARICOM, the OECS and the Regional Private Sector in the United States and promote their vital interests by facilitating Trade and Investment missions to and from the Caribbean, and hosting in the U. S., Trade and Investment Seminars, Trade Fairs and similar activities.
5. To arrange for high-level certification of Caribbean practitioners in the area of Leadership/Management in conjunction with the City University of New York; and
6. To assist with the public education process relative to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) in the United States.

Over two decades ago, Sir Alistair McIntyre, Former Prime Minister P. J. Patterson, Dr. Edwin Carrington and other Caribbean visionaries, spoke about the ***Time for Action***. CACCI believes that now is indeed the time for serious, positive action. Therefore, let the word go forth that we have forged a new level of partnership. Let the word go forth from New York to the Caribbean and farther afield that the Caribbean has a solid, unrelenting ally in the Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Let the word go forth that CACCI supports the regional integration process and will continue to respond positively to CARICOM, OECS Heads of Government and to Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) for assistance requested.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen: I leave you with a quote from **Barack Obama**, President of the United States, who in his Proclamation of June as National Caribbean American Heritage Month declared: "*Caribbean Americans bring a unique and vibrant culture. This multilingual and multiethnic tradition has strengthened our social fabric and enriched the diversity of our Nation. In their pursuit of success, Caribbean Americans exhibit the traits all Americans prize: determination, a devotion to community, and patriotism. They have made their mark in every facet of our society, from art to athletics and science to service... We also recognize the critical relationship the United States maintains with Caribbean nations. In a world of increasing communication and connectivity, this friendship has become even more important. We are neighbors, partners, and friends; we*

share the same aspirations for our children; and we strive for the very same freedoms. Together, we can meet the common challenges we face.”

Ladies and Gentlemen: Today wherever we may reside in various parts of the Caribbean Diaspora, we share not only a common heritage but we also have a common destiny. And as President Obama’s proclamation states, we also have common challenges. Today, we have an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to work together, to collaborate with each other to build an even more unified and stronger Caribbean Community. This invitation from the Caribbean Tourism Organization opens another window of opportunity for all of us in the Diaspora to continue the dialogue that allows us to hear each other’s voices, develop strategies for marshalling and sharing our collective resources, and move toward greater sustainability for ourselves and for our communities. ***God Bless you and God Bless the United States of America. Thank you!***

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