

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 15, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write to urge the State Department to send a high-level delegation to the upcoming 48th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on February 19-21 in Bridgetown, Barbados. Held under the theme “Strength in Unity: Forging Caribbean Resilience, Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development,” the Regular Meeting will provide the United States the opportunity to deepen its commitment to our mutually beneficial diplomatic, energy, economic, and security ties with partners in the Caribbean region.

The Caribbean is not just our neighbor; it is a key pillar of U.S. national security. As the third border of the United States, the Caribbean plays an indispensable role in addressing regional challenges, from countering illicit drug trafficking to curbing irregular migration and human smuggling. The Caribbean is essential to U.S. trade and energy security, serving as a crucial hub for shipping lanes and a strategic partner in diversifying energy sources. It is a region where the United States remains the number one trading partner and welcomes millions of U.S. citizens annually, while a vibrant Caribbean diaspora here in the United States solidifies our economic and cultural bridges. Bolstering cooperation with, and the capacity of, our Caribbean partners through high-level engagement serves as a force multiplier for the litany of U.S. national security and economic priorities in the region.

Moreover, as the People’s Republic of China (PRC) expands its influence in the Caribbean and Western Hemisphere through investments in energy and port infrastructure, sustained high-level U.S. engagement is necessary to keep PRC coercion at bay. Continued U.S. support for economic development, natural disaster resilience, and democratic governance is crucial to provide an alternative to China’s pernicious model in the CARICOM area, during a year with six national elections—including in two Taiwan-allied states—in the region.

Engaging with CARICOM also supports the vital regional cooperation that you have indicated is necessary to address the crisis in Haiti. As you know, CARICOM played an instrumental and indispensable role in facilitating a Transitional Presidential Council to lay the groundwork for a Haitian-led process for political and economic stability in Haiti. The Regular Meeting in Barbados will provide the United States an opportunity to rally support for the Multinational

Security Support Mission, bolster regional buy-in for a Haitian-led political process, and help address the hemispheric consequences arising from Haiti’s devastating security, economic, and humanitarian crises.

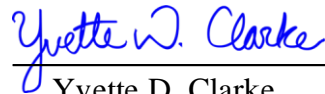
In the spirit of your comments championing a strategy that pays “closer attention to our own neighborhood—the Western Hemisphere,” we respectfully urge you to take advantage of the opportunity the February CARICOM Regular Meeting provides as a unique forum that brings together all of the Caribbean region’s leaders.¹ Continuing to send a robust and high-level U.S. delegation to the CARICOM meeting—as the prior Administration did—would reaffirm our partnership and demonstrate that we stand with our Caribbean allies in promoting regional security, economic resilience, and democratic governance.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We must show up for the Caribbean—this is in our own national interest. We look forward to your response and continued dialogue on how we can best do so.

Sincerely,



Gregory W. Meeks
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
House Foreign Affairs Committee



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress

¹ Rubio, Marco. "An America-First Foreign Policy." The Wall Street Journal, 12 Feb. 2025, <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/an-americas-first-foreign-policy-secretary-of-state-rubio-writes-western-hemisphere-too-long-neglected-a81707b0>.