

# *Cuba, Caribbean Community Agree on Joint Strategic Plan To Raise Region's Global Profile*

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Havana, March 13 (RHC-Agencies) -- Cuba and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have launched a joint "strategic work plan", aimed at both raising the region's global profile and boosting Caribbean development.

Speaking at the 5th CARICOM-Cuba Ministerial Meeting over the weekend in Havana, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said that defending unity among all Latin American and Caribbean nations and peoples is the only way to protect the region's sovereignty and independence.

Minister Rodriguez said the region is facing new dangers from extreme trade protectionism, inefficient implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and criminalization and deportation of nationals from Caribbean countries, whose human rights are frequently violated in the destination countries.

The top Cuban diplomat also said that religious and racial persecution were on the rise and that "building walls" would not solve the "problem of poverty, eliminate the effects of climate disasters or put an end to the unfair world order."

Maxine McClean, Foreign Minister of Barbados, which holds the rotating chairmanship of CARICOM, acknowledged the friendship between the regional organization and Cuba. Senator McClean said CARICOM keeps in high regard its relations with Cuba and acknowledges the role Cuba plays in the international arena.

During the ministerial meeting, Cuba also signed accords with other Caribbean countries in the areas of sports, education and culture.

Established in 1973, CARICOM currently has 15 members and its main purposes are to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members, to coordinate foreign policy and to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared.

The next CARICOM-Cuba summit is scheduled for December 2017 in Antigua and Barbuda.

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