

CARICOM denounces new US moves on Cuba



St Geogers, May 15 (RHC-CMC)– The 15-member Caribbean Community (CARICOM) grouping has denounced moves by the United States to strengthen the decades old trade and economic siege against Cuba.

In a statement issued following the two-day CARICOM Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) meeting in Grenada, CARICOM said it is “concerned by the new measures under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act announced by the Government of the United States of America, which would strengthen the US economic, commercial and financial (embargo) against Cuba”.

“The Community denounces the application of laws and measures of an extra-territorial nature that are contrary to international law.”

The Trump administration announced last month that it would end the suspension of the law that allows American citizens, including naturalized Cubans, to sue companies and their subsidiaries in Cuba that benefited from properties that were nationalized on the island after 1959.

The move by Washington is seen as a retaliation for Havana’s continued support for President Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela, where the United States is leading an effort to oust him from power.

Cuba insists that the nationalizations were conducted in full compliance with Cuban and international law.

The Association of Cuban Residents in Toronto (ACRT), Canada, has denounced Washington's move, saying the first impact will be suffered by investors who currently have commercial relations with Cuba and those who intend to do so in the future. ACRT president Julio Fonseca said the objective of the move is to intimidate, discourage and close doors to the island.

In its statement, CARICOM said it "notes with the greatest concern that the application of these new measures will also have a greater adverse impact on the socio-economic development of Cuba and the well-being of the Cuban People".

"The Community reiterates its endorsement of the principles of international law as well as its strongly-held view that economic development and stability in the region contribute to international peace and security," the statement added.

CARICOM Secretary General, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, told the COFCOR meeting that next month, the 15-member grouping will host the Sixth Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CARICOM and Cuba.

"Cuba has been a long-standing, supportive partner particularly in building the region's human capital in fields such as public health and sport. Our Community reiterates its call for the lifting of the unwarranted economic (embargo) and sanctions on Cuba, which were strengthened recently," he added.

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