

CARICOM STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN HAITI

CARICOM Heads of Government met on 2 and 3 March 2004 in Kingston, Jamaica, in an emergency session to consider the situation in Haiti.

The Heads of Government expressed dismay and alarm over the events leading to the departure from office by President Aristide and the ongoing political upheaval and violence in Haiti. They called for the immediate return to democratic rule and respect for the Constitution of Haiti.

The Heads of Government recalled that the CARICOM Prior Action Plan had been developed with the full involvement of the United States, Canada, the OAS and the European Union and fully endorsed by the international community. This initiative was guided by the need to preserve the rule of law and predicated on the precepts of shared government, binding both President Aristide and the legitimate opposition to specific commitments, which would lead to a peaceful resolution of the political impasse respectful of the constitution, and promoting the democratic process. Heads of Government were disappointed by the reluctance of the Security Council to take immediate action in response to appeals for assistance by the Government of Haiti.

On Sunday 29 February 2004, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1529 endorsing the deployment of a Multinational Interim Force to Haiti. This was what CARICOM had sought in the first place, but the decision was taken in circumstances quite different to those conceived in the CARICOM Plan since it followed immediately the departure from office of President Aristide.

They expressed the view that the circumstances under which the President demitted office set a dangerous precedent for democratically elected governments everywhere as it promotes the unconstitutional removal of duly elected persons from office.



P.J. Patterson Head of CARICOM

Reaffirming the fundamental tenets of governance within the Caribbean Community based on the Charter of Civil Society, as well as the principles enshrined in the Quebec Declaration and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, Heads of Government stressed that these obligations must be used to determine the democratic nature of governance in Haiti. In this regard, no action should be taken to legitimize the rebel forces nor should they be included in any interim government. The Heads of Government also agreed that the issue of relations with the interim administration would be the subject of urgent review at the upcoming Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference. Heads of Government were deeply perturbed at the contradictory reports surrounding the demission from office of the constitutionally elected President. These concerns were heightened by public assertions made by President Aristide that he had not demitted office voluntarily. Heads of Government called for an investigation under the auspices of the United Nations to clarify the circumstances leading to his relinquishing the Presidency.

AJA: A Stalwart in the Caribbean Community

The Atlanta Jamaica Association (AJA) will have as its guest speaker DeKalb County Chief of Police, Eddie Moody, at its monthly meeting on March 13. The meeting, set to begin at 7 p.m., will be at the Hillside Presbyterian Church Hall at 1879 Columbia Drive, in Decatur.

The AJA is a non-profit organization created "to promote friendship, unity and understanding between Jamaicans and the greater American community." Formed in 1978, AJA is the oldest and largest Caribbean organization in Atlanta with over 600 members. It is also the oldest and largest Jamaican organization in Atlanta. There are an estimated 40,000 Jamaicans living in Georgia and an estimated 15,000 residing in DeKalb County. According to the AJA, "Jamaicans make important contributions in medicine, law, accounting,

law enforcement, management, government and other fields of endeavors."

Many Jamaicans, AJA points out, have also married Americans and are rearing families embracing both cultures. The AJA provides a venue for a number of Jamaicans to socialize with others. It also provides a forum for Jamaicans to discuss strategies to improve their lives in the United States while helping to improve life back home, specifically through financial contributions to relatives still living in Jamaica. The AJA meets the second Saturday of each month, beginning at 7 p.m., at Hillside Presbyterian Church Hall, 1879 Columbia Drive in Decatur, Georgia.

According to the AJA, "These meetings are very spirited, and often feature guest speakers, convivial company, and Jamaican refreshments."

Among its many accomplishments, the AJA organizes Jamaican Independence week activities; works with Atlanta-Montego Bay Sister Cities' Committee of the Mayor's Office; provides a network of support for Jamaicans living in metro Atlanta; provides limited emergency financial relief for needy families through its emergency relief funds; sponsors a child at the St. John's Bosco Children's Home in Mandeville, Jamaica; contributes to the Savanna-la-mar and University hospitals in Jamaica; organizes many Family Day, civic, social and cultural functions; established the first day of 1,000 Lights with the Mayor's Office of Youth Services and the Atlanta Public School System.

The Association also played host to the 1996 Jamaican Olympic Team Award, which sponsored scholarships to Jamaican students in Atlanta for the past ten years. As part of its long-term goal, AJA is working toward acquiring a multi-purpose building to facilitate its meetings, social gatherings, sporting events and other uses as the membership may see appropriate for the organization.

For more information, contact Derrick Scott, Public Relations/Special Projects, at e-mail scotytd@bellsouth.net or phone 404-484-8883.



Young Achiever. Thirteen year old Gabrielle Scott receives her Honor Roll Award from Ms. Steen Miles, former News Anchor, WXIA TV - Channel 11, Atlanta, Georgia. Young Ms. Scott who attends Stone Mountain Middle School made the Honor Roll list for first semester 2003-2004. The presentation was made at the school's Honors Day on March 4, 2004. Gabrielle Scott is the daughter of Derrick Scott (Caribbean Punch Magazine) and Claudia Scott-Jones of Atlanta, Georgia.

DeKalb County Chief of Police, Eddie Moody

