
Barbados' PM to visit Cuba

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PRIME MINISTER Freundel Stuart will pay an official visit to the Republic of Cuba on Sunday, December 7, and will also attend the Fifth CARICOM-Cuba Summit the following day.

Stuart's delegation will include Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Charles Burnett; the Ambassador to CARICOM, Robert Morris and Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, Sonja Welch.

During the visit, the Prime Minister will participate in a bilateral meeting with the President of Cuba, Raul Castro, and attend a function for Barbadian descendants in Cuba, among other engagements.

Underscoring the importance of the official visit, Stuart said it would provide both countries with an opportunity to review their 42 years of diplomatic relations. "We will examine past cooperation, explore potential new areas of support and reaffirm the principles sustaining the relationship," he stated. The late Prime Minister, David Thompson, paid an official visit to Cuba in May 2009.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations on December 8, 1972, Barbados and Cuba have signed 11 bilateral agreements, including a Bilateral Investment Treaty, a Visa Abolition Agreement, a Double Taxation Agreement, and a Sports Cooperation Agreement. Barbados has benefited significantly from Cuba's technical assistance, particularly in the areas of health care, sports, education, culture and youth development.

The CARICOM Heads of State and Government will meet with President Raul Castro for their Summit on Monday, December 8. Some of the issues they will discuss are the CARICOM-Cuba Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement, technical cooperation, renewable energy, tourism, Small Island Developing States and Climate Change.

The First CARICOM-Cuba Summit for Heads of State and Government was held in Cuba from December 7 to 8, 2002, on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. At that time, the Heads agreed that December 8th each year would be

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celebrated as CARICOM-Cuba Day, and that a summit would be held every three years. The Second CARICOM-Cuba Summit was held in Barbados in 2005; the third in Havana in 2008; and the fourth was in Port of Spain in 2011. **(BGIS)**
