



SECURING OUR COMMON FUTURE: Towards Implementation of a Dynamic US/Caribbean Strategic Engagement Agenda (Public Law 114-291)



Institute of
Caribbean
Studies

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CARIBBEAN AMERICAN DIASPORA COMPANION PAPER TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT --Caribbean 2020: A Multi-Year Strategy To Increase the Security, Prosperity, and Well-Being of the People of the United States and the Caribbean

FOREWORD

The Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS), members of the Caribbean American Leadership Alliance (CALA), and the New York State Commission on H.R. 4939, wish to express their strong support of Public Law 114-291 and to offer some recommendations for the development and implementation of the multi-year strategy the law requires. Specific recommendations are presented according to the following themes: Diplomacy; Prosperity; Energy; Security; Education; Health; and, Diaspora Engagement.

An ICS Draft Documents was first circulated to members of CALA at a Stakeholders Consultative Meeting organized by the Institute of Caribbean Studies in partnership with the United States State Department in March 2017. Additionally, diaspora representatives, and members of CALA attendees at the meeting were invited to present additional papers or input. Subsequently, the Draft document was posted online for public comment until April 30th. A follow up review was held as part of the Caribbean Legislative Forum on Capitol Hill in June 21-22nd.

The following document and recommendations on H.R. 4939 are intended to serve as a basis for ongoing dialogue between members of the Caribbean American Diaspora, the United States Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), representatives of the U.S. Congress, the White House and the Caribbean Diplomatic Corps.

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The Appendix provides information on the Drafting Committee, ICS, the Caribbean American Leadership Alliance and the New York State Commission on H.R. 4939.

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CARIBBEAN AMERICAN DIASPORA COMPANION PAPER ON U.S.-CARIBBEAN STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT ACT OF 2016 (HR 4939)

I. BACKGROUND

1.1 Public Law No: 114-291 (HR 4939) states that it is U.S. policy to increase engagement with the governments of the Caribbean region, including the private sector, and with civil society in both the United States and the Caribbean. It further states that the Department of State shall submit to Congress a multi-year strategy for U.S. engagement to support the efforts of interested nations in the Caribbean region that:

- identifies State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) priorities for U.S. policy towards the Caribbean region;
- encourages efforts of the region to implement regional and national strategies that improve Caribbean energy security by increasing access to all available sources of energy, including taking advantage of the indigenous energy sources of the Caribbean and the ongoing energy revolution in the United States;
- improves diplomatic engagement with Caribbean governments;
- describes how the United States can develop an approach to supporting Caribbean countries in efforts they are willing to undertake with their own resources to diversify their economies; and,
- describes ways to ensure the active participation of citizens of the Caribbean in existing program and initiatives administered by the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

1.2 Given the Law calls for U.S. State Department (and USAID) engagement with civil society in both the United States and the Caribbean, the Institute of Caribbean Studies, members of the Caribbean American Leadership Alliance (an informal network convened on an ad-hoc basis since April 2007 following the Caribbean 2020 Vision workshop organized and facilitated by ICS), and the New York State Commission on HR 4939, wish to express their strong support of Public Law 114-291 and to offer some recommendations for the development of the multi-year strategy, as well as for the ongoing consultative process. Specifically, the Caribbean American diaspora is convinced that there is a clear and present need for strong and friendly U.S.-Caribbean relations. We believe it to be in the interests of both the U.S. and the Caribbean to continue to promote their mutual wellbeing by increasing opportunities to strengthen the historic ties that already exist. To this end, we stress the need for adequate funding for the U.S. State Department and other relevant agencies, to ensure that strategies defined by the State Department as helpful to securing the security and economic stability of the region; for such strategies to be executed in a manner which would assure America's continued pre-eminent partnership in the region, given the changing dynamics of a multi-polar world.

1.3 Given the role that the State Department serves as the 'de facto' Department of Peace, and given the increasing evidence of threats to America from non-state actors, we believe that our mutual security and safety are bound up together. Given that the Caribbean represents a third border of the U.S., it is the sentiment of the Caribbean diaspora that we make every attempt to maintain the bridge of understanding between the U.S. and the

Caribbean that has existed for decades; and as such, we in the Caribbean American diaspora commit to engaging with U.S. State Department, USAID and other relevant agencies and organizations to assure and ensure the effective execution of Public Law 114- 291, and thus wage a campaign for enduring peace and inclusive prosperity in the Americas.

1.4 Specific recommendations are presented according to the following themes:

- 1) Diplomacy
- 2) Prosperity
- 3) Energy
- 4) Security
- 5) Education
- 6) Health

1.5 Additionally, recommendations for a diaspora engagement process are included

II. DIPLOMACY

Issues:

2.1 The impression that the Caribbean region is of no strategic importance or priority, particularly as the “old” Cold War era came to an end, has led to increasing power of other poles in the global space. Yet, Caribbean countries have a longstanding tradition as reliable U.S. allies, which reality has been a key underpinning of U.S.-Caribbean diplomatic relations. This needs to be nurtured in order for this relationship to continue serving as a bulwark against any instability – social, political, security, etc. – which invariably would have immediate adverse impacts on the North, the Caribbean region being the so-called United States “Third Border.”

2.2 A contributing factor is the reduction of U.S. diplomatic presence in the member countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). This has had implications on many fronts, including the tourist industry and business relationships.

2.3 There are ongoing concerns regarding ‘lax’ relationships with potential “people of interest” to international security forces, as well as with regard to human rights in the region, exacerbated by the small population size which challenges the resolve and ability of Caribbean citizens to address challenges to rule of law and corruption in high places.

Recommendations:

2.4 It is of strategic diplomatic interest to have at least consular presence where Americans citizens vacation or live in significant numbers. As such, the diaspora recommends the establishment of Special Interest Sections and/or Consuls or Honorary Consuls in the Eastern Caribbean States, where no such presence exists.

2.5 A useful strategy might also be found in enhancing citizen diplomacy in the Caribbean region, taking advantage of the generally favorable embrace of Americans at the private and individual level. This might take the form of supporting the establishment of Partners of the Americas Chapters or American Chambers of Commerce that can represent U.S. private sector interests in those countries.

2.6 The Diaspora calls for increasing and deepening U.S. engagement in multilateral diplomacy to address regional common issues such as use of outer space and the Caribbean Sea, through organization such as the Organization of American States, as well as, U.S. participation in the Caribbean human rights agenda through support for organization such as, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. This would provide a forum for engaging the Caribbean region on challenging issues of human rights and media rights. It is also proposed that the U.S. consider enlisting diaspora professionals, and “citizen diplomats” to establish and execute a special Caribbean Human Rights Commission

2.7 To further enhance diplomatic relations between the U.S and the Caribbean region, the United States Executive branch could create a U.S- Caribbean Council/Office, whose focus is

to build hemispheric coalitions, secure commitments, and formalize the process for regional cooperation that support U.S. foreign policy objectives and law. The United States Caribbean Council would be fully funded through earmarks approved by the Executive Branch.

2.8 The United States Caribbean Council's mission would be to engage with governments of the Caribbean region to carry out the agreed on strategy to improve citizen security, reduce the trafficking of illicit drugs, strengthen the rule of law, and improve the effectiveness and longevity of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative. To execute its mission, the United States Caribbean Council will collaborate with the Department of Justice's newly formed Task Force on Reducing Violent Crime, the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice, the Department of State, the Director of National Intelligence to coordinate and implement an aggressive strategy featuring security integration programs. The security integration programs can help to improve citizen security, reduce trafficking of illicit drugs, and strengthen the rule of law throughout the Caribbean region in law enforcement and the judicial sector.

2.9 The United States Caribbean Council will be tasked to host an annual summit of Caribbean Ambassadors in the United States. The Summit will serve as an opportunity for cooperation on diplomacy, increasing economic competitiveness, fostering growth and development, improving regional and citizen security, and promoting democracy and human rights.

2.10 The United States Caribbean Council could support economic development through hosting an annual Business and Economic Development Tour/Trade Mission of American investors in the Caribbean Region. The tour would present significant investment opportunities for American businesses; strengthening the U.S. and the Caribbean's economic and business partnerships.

2.11 The Caribbean diplomatic community in the U.S. is a great conduit to improving U.S. Caribbean diplomacy in the United States and it is under-utilized. The United States Caribbean Council will work with the Caribbean Consular Corps (including honorary) to enhance the engagement at local and state level throughout the U.S.

2.12 The Caribbean Consular Corps should undertake a more robust role with respect to their interface with local city and state governments, which will help to provide awareness and understanding about immigration, education, investment, capital and many other benefits for Caribbean nationals here in the United States.

2.13 Additional U.S. diplomatic extension could be effected through the Executive Branch appointments of leading/noteworthy Caribbean Americans to the Boards and Commissions of relevant agencies that execute U.S. foreign policy, such as: the State Department, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), Woodrow Wilson Institute, Inter-American Foundation, Ex-Im Bank, National Science Foundation, Smithsonian Institution, U.S. Peace Institute, to build Caribbean American leadership equity in those agencies.

2.14 Build capacity within U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to facilitate the establishment of an office for monitoring the implementation of measures adopted as a result of Public Law No: 114-291 (HR 4939). These measures might include:

- i) A biannual summit on the Caribbean to address the socioeconomic development in the Region by reviewing progress and identify issues related to trade agreements;
- ii) Introduction or the removal of barriers that promote the speed of doing business and protect exclusive agreements between the United States and the Caribbean;
- iii) Preferential treatment to the region for the purpose of trade access and investment opportunities for businesses from the Caribbean region;
- iv) Relaxing procedural barriers for import-export exchange between the United States and the Caribbean region.

III. PROSPERITY

Trade and Investment:

Issues:

3.2 The Caribbean has traded with the United States under the various facilitating trading arrangements – the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) and the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA) – represented 0.07%, 0.04% and 0.03% respectively of U.S. total imports in 2015. These arrangements are not disadvantageous to U.S. trade interests as the U.S. enjoys a significant trade surplus with CARICOM countries of \$3.24 billion in 2014 and \$4.17 billion in 2015. Despite offering generous incentives to U.S. investors, including full repatriation of profits, U.S. investment in CARICOM countries has been declining steadily, and particularly after the recession that began in 2008. Of note for the United States is that all CARICOM countries have Tax Information Exchange Agreements (TIEAs) with the U.S. for the automatic provision of tax information, and that twelve (12) of the fourteen (14) countries have signed Inter-Governmental Agreements to comply with the U.S. Foreign Accounts Tax Compliance Act (FATCA).

3.3 Additionally, countries of the Caribbean have provided services in the form of skilled temporary workers (teachers, nurses, IT professionals as well as agricultural and hospitality workers) under U.S. Immigration Programmes (H-1A and H-1B) to satisfy the unmet demands of the U.S. labor market. We believe that the relationship between the U.S. and the Caribbean region would be strengthened by trade and that a stronger economy in the region can benefit both sides. We firmly believe in the economic viability of the region as an integral element of a policy of peace and security and that economic diversification, trade and global competitiveness of the region could be greatly enhanced through increased collaboration and partnerships.

3.4 Trade therefore has to be a crucial component of U.S.-Caribbean diplomatic relations since strong regional economies benefit both sides. If Caribbean producers, farmers, and service providers, as well as ordinary citizens find good opportunities to prosper at home, there could be an easing of the immigration “pressure” for the USA. Prosperity in the Caribbean also means more demand for American goods and services and thus an economic “virtuous circle.”

Recommendations:

- 3.5 The diaspora recommends a U.S./Caribbean Development Compact to include:
- i) A review of existing trade arrangements to examine the implications of expanding trade to include services, e.g. tourism and financial services, which offers growth opportunities for countries in the Caribbean.
 - ii) Strengthen the U.S.-CARICOM Trade and Investment Council and deepen ongoing mechanism for consultation on U.S./Caribbean Trade.
 - iii) A review of the rules of operations of the U.S. Trade Development Authority; the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the U.S. Ex-Im Bank be conducted in order to ensure support for U.S. investments in the region.

- iv) Provide support to Caribbean countries to continue with necessary reforms and initiatives aimed at improving trade facilitation environment, business and investment climate, as well as other measures needed to boost productivity and competitiveness.
- v) The expansion of the International Business Partnership Programs in support of export/import initiatives in the region. We also urge the continued support to U.S. State and USAID, MCC, EX-IM Bank, OPIC and USTDA in order to expand and deepen their reach in the region.
- vi) Encourage the expansion of the Public-Private Partnership Facility to increase technical capacity and financing to promote greater private sector-led investment in infrastructure.
- vii) Support new and innovative programs aimed at mobilizing capital from the diaspora such as an OPIC backed -- Diaspora Investment Fund— that might be channeled to economic or social infrastructure development efforts in the region.
- viii) Enhancing food security through support in the form of training, increased agricultural production & productivity, and diversifying exports towards higher value added products, are also key initiatives that can be supported to boost trade and economic development in the region. This also pertains to the fisheries sector.
- ix) Renew focus and strengthen relations between U.S. and Caribbean agribusiness sector in support e.g. farmer exchanges; agri-processing business exchanges; cooperative development; university and research partnerships such as, soil sciences, nutraceuticals, and food technology.
- x) Maintain or increase levels of visas for H1B and H2 visa categories for temporary farm workers, hospitality sector workers, etc.

Climate Change and the Environment

Issues:

3.6 The issue of climate change is vital if not existential for the Caribbean, as it represents one of the most serious challenges to the development prospects and future viability of the region. While not being a major contributor to global warming, the Caribbean stands to feel the full brunt of climate change impacts, particularly those resulting from rising sea levels. This, together with the associated coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion, as well as the escalation in the frequency and intensity of tropical storms and hurricanes, and the disruptions in fresh-water supplies, threatens the sustainable management of the Blue Economy and the very existence of Caribbean countries.

The withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement is a serious setback to global efforts to combat climate change and mitigate its effect. Given the potential impact and threat to the Blue Economy and sustainable development of the region however, it is hoped that the administration will continue to promote policies and programs that support adaptation and mitigation efforts, and other integrated strategies that help to combat climate change. We are encouraged by the significant support for climate action at the State and private sector levels in the U.S., which might offer opportunities for continued engagement critical to these issues.

Recommendations:

3.7 The diaspora proposes:

- i) the deepening of relationships and cooperation for technical assistance between coastal states e.g. Maryland, North Carolina and the State of Florida, and U.S. insular Caribbean territories (U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico) in relation to coastal zone issues in general, and in particular, the Caribbean Large Marine Eco-System (CLME), through agencies such as NOAA; Department of the Interior; and National Science Foundation.
- ii) support for the convening of a U.S./Caribbean Sea Consultative Group to discuss improved mapping and management of the CLME, as well as the sustainable management of the Caribbean blue economy.
- iii) support for the formation of a public/private U.S./Caribbean Sea Council made up of organizations that benefit from or advocate for the sustainable management of the Caribbean Blue Economy, such as: cruise shipping companies, shipping companies, communications companies, oil companies, hotel and tourism companies, and relevant NGOs.

Financial Services/Correspondent Banking

Issues:

3.8 The financial services sector, and specifically banking, continues to be a vital sector for the development of CARICOM economies. It is the second largest contributor to GDP in the Caribbean Region. Given the important role of this sector in the Community's growth and development, the increasing curtailment of correspondent banking relations has become a source of extreme concern. It has the potential to threaten the Region's economic stability and its capacity to remain integrated into the global financial, trade and economic systems. It has also become a significant threat to the Community's trade in goods and services with the United States. It is hoped therefore that the proposed financial deregulation of banks mooted by the incoming Administration may help relieve the regulatory pressures on U.S. global banks that have played a critical part in "de-risking" and the ensuing curtailment of correspondent banking relations.

Recommendations:

3.9 Given the impact of Caribbean trade in goods and services with the U.S., the diaspora maintains the need for a win-win outcome on the issue of financial services. Specifically, we propose that if needed a third party agency be established by the U.S./Caribbean stakeholders to address this problem.

3.10 The diaspora also considers it critical to the survival of their families in the Caribbean that there be a fair and affordable banking relationships. In this regard, efforts must be made to reduce the cost of remittances which provide much of the social safety net for the region.

3.11 Other than social safety net remittances, there is little repatriation of the resources of Caribbean nationals back to their countries of origin. Remittances can be leveraged to offer more financial benefits to the Caribbean region and economy e.g. providing tax breaks for Diaspora Bond or Community Investment Notes, for example; programs such as that launched by Calvert Foundation aimed at promoting Social Investment projects.

3.12 It is recommended that a study be undertaken to create tax breaks for contributions of capital investment by Caribbean nationals in the U.S. for economic or social infrastructure projects aimed at unemployment reduction in the Region. This would include e.g. construction of Youth development facilities; sporting facilities and work force skills development centers.

Information and Communication Technology

Issues:

3.13 The establishment of a Single ICT space would allow the Region to be viewed as a single Caribbean space. Its benefits would include:

- i) deepening market and competition & reducing cost of access (single broadband market).
- ii) reduced mobile roaming charges.
- iii) a common regional spectrum space.
- iv) providing more opportunities for research and innovation.
- v) transforming the institutional and human resource capacities of the Region.
- vi) creating the opportunity to partner with the United States on developing the fundamentals of the CARICOM Digital economy.

These issues were raised in U.S./CARICOM Heads of Government in Jamaica in 2015; and in 2016, the Meeting of the CARICOM-U.S. Trade and Investment Council (TIC) agreed to the establishment of a Joint Expert Group on ICT.

Recommendations:

3.14 The Diaspora proposes promotion and provision of private sector investment for the expansion of Internet access throughout the region, especially to countries lacking the appropriate infrastructure; and the continuation the work of the Joint Expert Group on ICT.

IV. ENERGY

Issues:

4.1 The cost of energy is unbearably high in the Caribbean - in terms of currency, balance of payments and other macroeconomic issues - which end up hurting everyday citizens by making goods more expensive and thus exacerbating the poverty and crime issues. Over the past 10 years, the United States, though behind the OECD countries, has begun to place greater emphasis on renewables here in the USA, as well as on promoting clean and renewable energy initiatives in CARICOM countries, as part of a wider program targeting the wider Caribbean and Central America. Whether this was in order to wean the Region from its dependence on Venezuelan oil, and solely for that reason, the realities of climate change and public interest in ensuring clean environment needed for Caribbean tourism remains vital to our economies. Though cognizant of earlier signals of the intention of the new Administration to deregulate the exploitation of fossil fuel and, probably, to accord less priority to renewables, CARICOM should seek to build on the cooperation initiatives undertaken under the Obama Administration, as U.S. concerns *vis-à-vis* Venezuela would remain extant.

Recommendations:

4.2 Given the importance of energy security and the opportunities and innovations around renewable/off-grid technologies innovated by American companies, the diaspora would like to encourage sustained interests and investments in these areas, continued support for the Caribbean Energy Security Initiative (CESI), as well as programs for increasing entrepreneurial and innovative capacity.

V. SECURITY

Issues:

5.1 Caribbean-U.S. security cooperation has been strengthened over the past ten (10) years through the creation of institutionalized arrangements under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). To the extent that the U.S. self-interest is at play in the U.S.-Caribbean regional security initiatives, the CBSI mechanisms may not be threatened by the change of administration, though they could be modified. The United States needs stronger security cooperation with the region in order to deter support to terrorism and terrorist activities, and encroachment in the Caribbean.

5.2 At the same time, the Caribbean remains woefully under-prepared to deal with the sophisticated weaponry and crimes growing in the region. Of concern is the impact of uncensored provision of economic citizenships and diplomatic passports by Caribbean countries, and the criminal deportees from the U.S. and elsewhere. High-level criminal deportees to the Caribbean exacerbate existing security concerns, owing to access to sophisticated networks of criminal enterprises they can engage.

5.3 Issues facing the Caribbean region which could negatively impact on the U.S. include: money laundering; narco-terrorist financing; trafficking in arms or weapons proliferation to include chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives (CBRNE); trafficking in drugs to include illegal street drugs, over-prescribed medications, controlled substances, chemicals and prescription pills; trafficking in humans for forced labor or sex trafficking; Terrorism or support thereto; cyber security; trade in illegal commercial and counterfeit goods that violate intellectual property laws.

5.4 The Caribbean Community Strategic Plan for 2015-2019 identifies needs such as:

- i) Deepening crime prevention initiatives and programs;
- ii) Pursuing functional cooperative security engagements to tackle and manage shared risks and threats;
- iii) Enhancing human resource capabilities;
- iv) Strengthening regional security systems and CARICOM borders; and
- v) Enhancing maritime and airspace awareness.

Recommendations:

5.5 Regarding the intent of the policy to: "Support regional economic, political, and security integration efforts in the Caribbean region," consolidate the flow of intelligence information and coordinate the response of local and foreign security agencies, it is recommended that the regional function of the "fusion center" in Barbados be expanded to include a modernized Fusion Center facility in Jamaica. A modern and properly equipped Fusion Center, although located in Jamaica, would enable all Caribbean nations to professionalize their security forces and work together, and in collaboration with the United States, to do the following:

- i) Become a repository for reliable and verifiable intelligence information, and standardize an intake/distribution system for actionable/relevant operational intelligence to concerned entities in the Caribbean region and elsewhere, as

- supported by the Caribbean Security Basin Initiatives.
- ii) Develop standardized training/systems in the art of intelligence gathering and counter-intelligence methods, through the use of modernized technology and human sources, to impact regional problems and priorities.
 - iii) Identify critical structures/infrastructures (on land and sea) in the region, and develop standardized training and protocols to coordinate the response of local and regional assets/resources to address major incidents, including terrorism, which may affect such critical structures/infrastructures.
 - iv) Develop a cyber-risk analysis and security program with capabilities to analyze, prevent where possible, and/or mitigate cyber-risk as part of the overall efforts to counter trans-national crime in the region.
 - v) Develop a counter arms proliferation strategy to prevent the spread or development of **CBRNE** capability or individuals or groups acquiring advanced military weapons, high powered or small arms; or technology which could threaten the Caribbean's interests or regional stability.
 - vi) Establish protocols, procedures and policies that would improve effective maritime domain awareness to address potential for piracy and other maritime crimes on the open seas.
 - vii) Consider utilizing the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS)-ratified Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) to enable the exchange of emergency alert and public warning information over data networks and warning systems.
 - viii) Support the training of personnel in judiciary, penal, military and police systems to assist with improving systems reform and sector management.
 - ix) Support the training of members of the U.S. Coast Guard, and other DHS security apparatus in maneuvers and training, which can provide cultural insight often necessary to be effective.
 - x) Provide additional material support for the Caribbean security forces to include e.g. surplus equipment that DOD has made available to U.S. municipal law enforcement agencies.

5.6 Regarding the intent of the policy to: "Reduce levels of crime and violence, curb the trafficking of illicit drugs, strengthen the rule of law, and improve citizen security," through deepening Crime Prevention Initiatives and Programs, the diaspora proposes the extension of grants to promote a Safer Cities Initiative (SCI). Such initiative would encourage cooperative activities to counsel, de-conflict, and train, citizens and police in the art of community policing. Through USAID and the Caribbean Security Basin Initiatives, we propose support for the following:

- i) Crime prevention programs that are multi-faceted (have components of prevention, intervention, and enforcement strategies), and are principally designed to address causation factors (youth development, job training, re-entry, education, leadership skills, etc.), and not just the symptoms.
- ii) Creation of well-trained "Gang Impact Teams" (similar to Los Angeles), which would be trained to develop expertise on gang operations, and enforce anti-gang laws. Their primary role would be to identify and apprehend drug dealers and gang leaders who are involved in local and trans-national drug trafficking and other related violent crimes. The effectiveness of the Gang Impact Teams would be enhanced by utilizing diaspora experts as trainers and advisors; as well as by

forming multi-agency task forces (both U.S. and Caribbean assets) to target violent career criminals who are deported from the United States to the region, and using their U.S. contacts to engage in trans-national crimes.

- iii) Provision of technical assistance, where possible utilizing qualified Caribbean diaspora law enforcement experts, to provide training on the ethical enforcement of laws and leadership in law enforcement, and addressing the compelling need to create a cultural shift in police departments in the region to change from a culture of laissez-faire corruption to a culture built on values of integrity and quality service to the general public as opposed to just leadership elite.
- iv) Support broad comprehensive training and education to reform police departments and the entire justice system in the region. This will ensure reduced human rights violations by police when effecting arrests; protection of witnesses and suspects' rights; access to justice for all, regardless of their social or economic status, and humane treatment of prisoners.

5.7 We also posit a robust relationship between the United States and Caribbean Cadet programs to support:

- i) Enhanced civil defence capacity in the Caribbean territories at the time of natural disaster;
- ii) Exchanges between U.S., JROTC/ROTC and Caribbean Cadets to foster bonds and promote the transfer of skills;
- iii) Improved emergency management procedures and practice especially during times of disaster.

VI. EDUCATION

Issues:

6.1 The State Department through its Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) is challenged to accomplish its mission to “work to build friendly, peaceful relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, and professional exchanges, as well as public-private partnerships,” relative to the Caribbean region due to insufficient engagement of the Caribbean side.

6.2 Opportunities for the Caribbean to be more effective trade partners, champions of democracy, and grow strong sustainable economies, are hampered by inadequate education and training in strategic management, entrepreneurship, science and technology, and transformational leadership.

Recommendations:

6.3 The diaspora recommends the following:

- i) Promote engagement of Caribbean tertiary institutions through partnerships with diaspora Caribbean American professionals to support U.S. funded technical assistance initiatives in the areas of leadership, management, and entrepreneurship capacity building from inception through execution, and the evaluation of effectiveness.
- ii) Create mechanisms and processes to engage Diaspora as Mentor Capital to help identify and position Caribbean nationals to take advantage of U.S. and State Department programs to improve Caribbean rate of participation in such programs.
- iii) Strengthen academic exchange programs for both faculty and students at all levels of education from elementary through university level that takes advantage of the strengths of each system, creates centers of excellence, and encourages enduring relationships between participants. Utilize Caribbean American Diaspora with Academic affiliations in the U.S. and experience with Caribbean institutions to participate in program creation.
- iv) Improve U.S. Advising Centers in the Caribbean effectiveness by utilizing diaspora members who have gone through the process as well as facilitate linkages between Caribbean students wishing to matriculate in the U.S. and Caribbean-American university students via Embassy Exchanges.
- v) Support technical and specialized tertiary training for Caribbean cadets at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, or other tertiary level institutions to include HBCUs and/or creation of education exchanges to enhance leadership and skills training in marine science, disaster relief, and management/governance based on rule of law, security and civic responsibility for the Caribbean cadets.
- vi) Include distinguished Caribbean Americans as VIP Guests in U.S. Information Service Programs that bring U.S. visitors to countries as artistes and expert speakers; as well as through cultural, sports, and academic and professional exchange programs administered by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

6.4 The Department of State's Office of Caribbean Affairs (OCA) might partner with agencies such as the proposed US Caribbean Council to launch a series of aggressive, targeted, marketing campaigns in the Caribbean region to promote the existing programs and initiatives administered by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; promote access to temporary visas for study and work (F1 & F2, J1 & H2).

6.5 In the United States, (OCA) might promote the law, H.R. 4939; promote the formation of the United States Caribbean Council; and promote doing business at the international level of operation with NGO's and public-private partners.

6.6 The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (BECA) should expand the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program, the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (Global UGrad), and the Community College Initiative (CCI) Exchange Program to include the Caribbean region. Further, the Department of State's BECA should implement short-term Vocational and Technical Trade Skills Exchange Programs (6 weeks-6 months) where persons from the Caribbean region can become certified in skill of choice at a U.S. College or University.

VII. HEALTH

Issues:

7.1 Given U.S. competencies in health care, and the fact that border issues are expected to be a challenge, the U.S. State Department should consider health diplomacy as a key prong for maintaining U.S. influence in the Caribbean. It is well established that Caribbean immigrants are highly engaged at all levels of the U.S. health care system. And while there are good medical schools operating in the Caribbean region, U.S.-Caribbean partnerships could be expanded further to train more home-based nationals to meet the growing need both locally and within the U.S.

Recommendations:

7.2 It is proposed that health diplomacy include assistance at the bi-lateral level to help build needed technical capacity in said health care systems that would position the Caribbean to provide improved primary medical care, epidemiological surveillance for their nationals, and affordable medical care to diaspora visitors through the promotion of health care investments, including provision of cross-border arrangements in insurance.

7.3 Additionally, in partnership with multi-lateral agencies such as the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and the World Bank areas for cooperation in health should be identified, including:

- i) Development of Health Surveillance and Disaster Response systems to ensure rapid and effective response systems for pandemics, the frequency of which is expected to increase worldwide. Partners in the system that have well-developed surveillance systems in place to detect airborne diseases as well as have appropriate bioterrorism labs with which to treat and test biological agents.
- ii) Provision of certification for U.S. citizens via DHHS and U.S. Surgeon General to health facility centers in the region that desire to develop health capacities in select sectors for the purpose of attracting medical tourism.
- iii) Support for Diaspora Health Care Engagements - diaspora engagement in order to work with the Caribbean nations in identified priority areas setting up "Telehealth" systems; incentivizing diaspora professionals to assist or invest in health systems in participating countries and support for knowledge exchanges for the training and development of specialized health professionals.
- iv) Utilization of the Federal Government Loan Program to identify high-skilled individuals to form a Health Service Corps with unique language skills and knowledge of the region, and willingness to be sent to the Caribbean region on loan.
- v) DHHS, CDC, USAID ought to be engaged in the implementation of a State Department engagement strategy.

VIII. DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

Issues:

8.1 The Caribbean American diaspora is not a monolith. As in the region, factions, fractions, and fissures occur along the fault lines of class, gender, nationality, race and religion. The organized groupings within the diaspora, to be differentiated from the **Diaspora**, are largely composed of national organizations, sub-national groups, and sector specific groups in health, education and sports, etc. Efforts to organize umbrella bodies nationally have occurred along country lines such as the Jamaicans, Barbadians, Haitians and Antiguan, and these efforts have waxed and waned according to the leadership, and the political climate and crises at home. The Haitian and Jamaican umbrella organizations are probably the most stable; with self- organized bodies pre-dating the government imposed ones.

8.2 At the trans-Caribbean level, efforts to organize under the National Coalition of Caribbean Affairs, which was launched in 1998 fizzled out after the 2007 CARICOM Heads Meetings in Washington, and the leaders of that body established the Caribbean Policy Research Center at the behest of the CARICOM governments. There was also a failed attempt to organize the Carnival Associations. No study has been done to identify why such experiments failed but one major challenge has certainly been the fact that all such organizations have not been able to master the financing required to professionally staff such organizations. This is due in large part to the fact that traditional foundations do not view Caribbean diaspora organizations as part of the stakeholder community owing to their largely volunteer status. In more recent years, with interest in the potential of diasporas as a means of economic transformation, the World Bank and the Inter- American Development Bank have designed projects and studies around diaspora financing for development. These have had some positive results, albeit they have done little to strengthen the diaspora organizing and organizations themselves. Most recently, Jamaican attempts to capture diaspora data was met with skepticism owing to the poor design of the consultation process.

8.3 As a result of these observations, ICS's approach in attempting to organize a trans-Caribbean national leadership alliance has been extremely cautious. ICS' approach includes using the Caribbean American Heritage Month Movement to organize and influence leadership across the country and to establish a National Commemorative Committee which includes leaders who consider themselves ICS representatives and 'members', as well as leaders who consider themselves partners – an important distinction. Outside of the Caribbean American Heritage Month organizing process, since its founding in 1993, ICS has also established relationships with leaders of organizations as well as influencers who consider themselves allies of ICS. Such individuals include: members of the ICS Faith-Based Advisory Council, ICS Elected Official Advisory Council, ICS Research Advisory Council, and some Honorees of the National Caribbean American Heritage Awards.

8.4 Thus, ICS Caribbean American Leadership Alliance (CALA) is considered a Convening Space of ICS representatives, allies and partners, for matters of national interest. The Complete Count 2010 Census Process was one such matter. ICS' served as a Focal Point for the process which allowed the Census Department to reach a broad group of the diaspora without infringing on the sovereignty of those involved in the Census consultative process. This alliance-building is a fluid process, and ICS does not in any way purport to exert any

control over the operations of any of the leaders and influencers who consider themselves to be aligned with ICS. The CALA motto is “a coalition of the willing, and alliance of the able to get past ego-based divides and differences to dialogue on issues of mutual concern, and affect a harmonized approach to community building.” It is ICS’ belief that any attempt to form an umbrella organization would be met with extreme resistance, and as such the consultative process outlined here is designed to reflect these realities.

Recommendations:

8.5 Recognizing the challenges of organizing the Caribbean American diaspora, we propose that in order to enhance the effective implementation of Public Law 114- 291, a consultative process should be established with the Caribbean diaspora that builds on current relationships and processes in the Caribbean-American diaspora working with both national umbrella organizations as well as trans-Caribbean processes such as CALA. State Department should work with Embassies directly to secure information on leaders in their communities that operate in such clusters. It is also recommended that members of the Caribbean diaspora be included in existing consultative or advisory processes at the federal level that would ensure institutionalization of these commitments in the long run.

8.6 A suggested consultative process might include the establishment of an Ad-Hoc Committee tentatively named the **Consultative Committee on Caribbean Affairs** that would participate actively in the design of the consultative process itself, which would include the formation of Working Groups on each of the five thematic issues covered here. Further, consideration needs to be given to the reality that diaspora groups are largely self- financed so financing for consultative processes would need to be identified. A public-private partnership is recommended to effect this in a way that empowers and builds capacity of the diaspora. Stakeholder consultation processes in the diaspora should follow the best practices used in the development assistance community in doing community development work.

8.7 The Consultative Committee would assist with the convening of a mandatory public forum during Caribbean American Legislative Week in Washington DC, normally held during National Caribbean American Heritage Month. In addition, the Consultative Committee would design and undertake with State Department personnel public consultations in locations across the U.S. each year e.g. New York, South Florida, Atlanta, Chicago and Los Angeles. State Department should also utilize webinars and other online processes to engage the diaspora on work carried out by State, the Consultative Committee and the Working Groups to advance agreed-on agendas arising from any agreements.

8.8 Implementation might also be supported by way of a Caribbean Diaspora Task Force approach borrowed from the Jamaica Diaspora Task Force Playbook. The Diaspora Task Force approach set in motion over the last four or so years, have added a new, proactive dynamic to Diaspora engagement. They are serving as an effective way for individuals and organizations in the Diaspora and Jamaica to quickly join forces and organize around key goals and projects. The Jamaica Education Task Force (JETF) was the first to launch in 2014 and has served as a model for successive Task Forces. In the last two years, additional Task Forces based on the Education Task Force, are operational and making progress towards their stated goals include:

- i) Agriculture and Food Security;
- ii) Crime Intervention and Prevention; and,
- iii) Immigration and Deportation Prevention. The Task Force model is proving to be cost-effective, easily adaptable for any area of development work, and scalable to fit various islands and sub-regional groupings.

8.9 To further institutionalize Caribbean engagement with the U.S. State Department and USAID, it is recommended that members of the Caribbean diaspora be integrated into the current consultative processes of the U.S. State Department. This includes but is not limited to existing advisory councils, committees and commissions such as: Advisory Committee on Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society; Overseas Schools Advisory Council; Overseas Security Advisory Council; and U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy.

8.10 In addition, we recommend that Caribbean Americans be considered for appointments to Boards and Commissions of other U.S. government funded organizations and agencies carrying out work relevant to the mandate of State Department and USAID such as: Woodrow Wilson Institute, Inter-American Foundation, U.S. Institute of Peace, U.S. Peace Corps, Inter-American Defense College, U.S. Trade and Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce; Overseas Private Investment Corporation; the U.S. Ex-Im Bank; U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States and Pan America Health Organization; and the U.S. Offices of the Executive Directors in both the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank.

IX. CLOSING

9.1 A climate of mutual respect and engagement between the U.S. and the Caribbean would contribute positively to the advancement of inclusive prosperity and economic sustainability in the Americas. The Caribbean American diaspora recognizes that the potential for such advancement will remain limited to an elite few individuals and businesses, unless policies and strategies are put in place to focus the benefits of democracy and capitalism toward the common good. The benefits of technological advances of the 21st century and American-centered globalization must effectively serve each person's right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, no matter what country they live in.

9.2 The Caribbean American diaspora believes that by involving civil society in the process of diplomacy between the Caribbean and the USA, we promote democratic principles, inclusive political culture, and institutions that safeguard both individual civil rights and inherent freedoms and the common good, while supporting pertinent values in human rights, labor standards, and environmental preservation. Our mutual security, both short-term and long-term, is bound up in our ability to deliver sustainable economic development and access to health and education, through diplomacy that recognizes the right of nations and peoples to chart their own destiny.

9.3 Any government by the people and for the people must include the people and act with solidarity and insight. Free access to information will undoubtedly be the bellwether of continuing confidence by the citizens of the Americas in their respective national administrations, and such information is critical for increasing transparency and reducing corruption, especially in smaller nations.

9.4 Finally, the Caribbean American Diaspora has always supported innovative and effective ways of deepening cooperation between the U.S. and the Caribbean region at all levels, and looks forward to offering its support and guidance to the efforts to best benefit inclusive prosperity and sustainable economic development.

APPENDIX

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

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- Wesley Kirton
- Alland Leandre
- Scherie Murray
- Dr. Claire Nelson (Chair)
- Herbert Nelson Jnr.
- Oscar Spencer (Co-Chair)
- Roxanne Valies
- Eric Walcott

This document benefitted from the advice and input of many other individuals including for example: Gabriel Christian Esq., Hon. Donna Christensen, Gary Scotland, Peter Whittingham.

About ICS

The Institute of Caribbean Studies (ICS) is a non-partisan, non-profit organization established in 1993; dedicated to education, advocacy and action on issues that impact Caribbean-Americans and promotes the welfare of Caribbean society.

Vision: An inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable Caribbean society

Mission: To engage and empower Caribbean-Americans, Caribbean Nationals, and "friends of the Caribbean" to create an inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable society through education, thought leadership, advocacy, and programming.

ICS provides a forum for the public and private sector, the non-government organization community, scholars and others interested in promoting a dialogue; and assist in the execution of actions resulting from that dialogue. Since its inception, ICS has been at the forefront of the challenge to bring attention to issues of critical importance to the Caribbean American community, estimated at around 5 million. ICS has an important role in history as the first Caribbean-American community organization in the Washington DC area devoted to the inclusion of Caribbean-Americans in U.S. policy making and the economic development of the Caribbean region. Being based in Washington DC makes the ICS an ideal interlocutor, advocate and intermediary between the U.S. government, multilateral agencies, the private sector, Caribbean-American communities, and Caribbean governments.

Selected Highlights:

- First Caribbean American Economic Conference (1994)
- Established Caribbean American Heritage Awards (1994)
- Named to US Dept. of Commerce US-Caribbean Business Council 1996)
- Established Annual Caribbean American Briefing on Capitol Hill (1999)
- First White House Briefing (1999)
- Convener, Commemoration of June as National Caribbean-American Heritage Month (1999)

- Recognition US Congressional Record (2005)
- Successful adoption of June as National Caribbean American Heritage Month (2006)
- National Profile Partner US Census (2009)
- Created Caribbean American Faith Based Advisory Council (2010)
- White House Champion of Change (2012)
- Selected as State Department Diaspora in Development Partner (2013)
- Funded by US Embassy in Kingston to Convene Forum on The Future of Jamaica (2015)

ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE:

The Caribbean American Leadership Alliance (CALA) is a program initiative of the ICS. CALA was the outcome of the Caribbean Vision 2020 Forum held in June 2007. The vision of ICS to create a network of no more than 150 Caribbean American leaders and influencers who would be able to collaborate at the national and international level on issues related to the well-being and welfare of Caribbean Americans, to advance a harmonized approach to advocacy on behalf of Caribbean Americans at all levels of government – local, state and national. This approach was developed to capitalize on relationship capital and shared objectives arising from the movement to gain and sustain the commemoration of June as National Caribbean American Heritage Month, and a Complete Caribbean Count in Census 2010. The vision is to advance working relationships based on trust and mutual respect, which are adaptable, agile and effective in addressing the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous challenges facing Caribbean society.

Members of the CARIBBEAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE include, for example:

NAME	ANCESTRY/NATIONALITY	STATE
Miranda Alexander	Trinidad	PA
Joseph Baptiste	Haiti	MD
Carole Boyce Davies	Trinidad	NY
Joyce Cacho	Belize	VA
Jerry Castro	Guatemala	NE
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Robert Cumberbatch	Trinidad & Tobago	AZ
Chris Daley	Jamaica	MD
Omyma David	Antigua & Barbuda	NY
Olive Ezell	St. Lucia	VA
Marva Herman	Jamaica	CA
George Irish	Montserrat	NY
Francis Joseph	Grenada	FL
Marlin Kirby	Jamaica	IL
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Marilyn La Force	St. Lucia	LA
Ronald Lammy	Guyana	MA
Terrence Layne	Panama	TX
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Vince Liburd	St. Kitts & Nevis	MD
Courtney McFarlane	Jamaica	GA
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Rev. Bevon White	Jamaica	MD
Gerald White-Davis	Jamaica	NY
Marissa Williams	Trinidad & Tobago	GA
Janice Wisdom	Jamaica	CA

ABOUT THE NEW YORK STATE COMMISSION ON H.R. 4939

The New York State Caribbean Commission on H.R. 4939, is led by Republican State Committee Woman, Hon. Scherie Murray. The mission for the New York State Caribbean Commission on H.R. 4939 is to engage the United States government on policies related to H.R. 4939.

New York State Commission on H.R. 4939 Policy Contributors:

- Hon. Scherie Murray, State Committeewoman, Republican Party - 29th Assembly District
- Shaun Walsh, Producer - Whatz Up New York; Nursing Student
- Dr. Geneive Brown-Metzger – Past Consul General, New York – Jamaica Consular Corps
- Leo Gilling - Jamaica Diaspora Task Force Committee
- Kimone Gooden - Jamaica Diaspora Task Force Committee
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