



THE UNITED STATES AT THE CARICOM MINISTERIAL

Democracy and Human Rights

"The interests of my nation, of all our nations, are served by strong, healthy democratic neighbors, and are served best by lasting friendships in our own neighborhood." —President George W. Bush

The United States promotes governments that respect democratic institutions, expand economic opportunities, and work with their neighbors. It shares a tradition of democracy and respect for human rights with the nations of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), as evidenced in the Ministerial to be held March 21-22, 2006 in The Bahamas.

Reinforcing Democracy

The United States reinforces democratic values in the Caribbean through U.S. Government-administered programs on democracy, conflict resolution, and humanitarian assistance.



Voters in Kenscoff, Haiti vote on Feb. 7, 2006 in national presidential and parliamentary elections.

Supporting Elections

The U.S. has worked successfully with Guyana, Jamaica and Haiti to develop modern electoral systems capable of conducting free and fair elections. The United States:

- Funds technical assistance and training for the Guyana Elections Commission while supporting a national level dialogue aimed at reducing ethnic tensions; and
- Assisted the Haitian Provisional Electoral Commission in carrying out elections and funding many electoral support projects.

Strengthening Civil Society

The U.S. civil society programs focus on:

- Improving community-police relations in Jamaica;
- Strengthening anti-corruption watchdogs in the public and private sectors;
- Capacity-building and training in Haiti for civil society to understand principles of good governance, democratic development and civic rights and responsibilities.

Improving Judicial Systems

The U.S. judicial programs in Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean have focused on:

- Enhancing the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States court systems' efficiency and fairness through computerization and streamlined case-flow management;
- Promoting a fuller use of alternative dispute resolution methods as an alternative to going to court;
- Providing judicial and administrative training to judges, magistrates and court staffs;
- Training professional court reporters to record court proceedings using automated means;
- Providing technical assistance on the establishment of a new Caribbean Court of Justice;
- Modernizing the court registries in Jamaica.

Building Bridges, Investing in Leaders

The United States reaches out to people in the Caribbean through exchange programs:

- Two hundred-seventeen Caribbean leaders came to the United States from 2003 to 2005 through exchange programs concerning good governance, combating drug trafficking, anti-corruption, and other topics.
- In 2005, the Fulbright Program funded 91 Caribbean students to begin or continue graduate study in the United States and sent nine U.S. scholars and 13 U.S. students to the Caribbean.
- Twenty-one U.S. experts were sent in 2005 to the region to discuss topics ranging from intellectual property rights to environmental protection to library science.

Challenges for the Future

Building from our common traditions, the United States and nations of the Caribbean can forge a solid block of like-minded democratic nations to promote democracy and human rights in the region and beyond. The U.S. will coordinate closely with its CARICOM neighbors on issues of mutual concern including political transition in Haiti and the protection of democracy and human rights around the world.