



# MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **JAMAICA ASSUMES CHAIRMANSHIP OF CARICOM'S COUNCIL FOR FOREIGN AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS (COFCOR)**

(MFA&FT: May 16, 2023)

**Jamaica has assumed Chairmanship of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) at the Twenty-Sixth Regular Meeting now underway in Kingston.**

**Under the leadership of Senator the Honourable Kamina Johnson Smith, Jamaica is hosting the Twenty-Sixth Regular Meeting of the COFCOR, at which the CARICOM Secretary-General, Dr. Carla Barnett, and CARICOM Foreign Ministers are in attendance.**

The Meeting is being held over two days, and will feature discussions on priority issues of regional and international interest, including the situation in Haiti, climate change, relations with Third States, and developments in hemispheric and multilateral bodies.

The Council will also engage with the Governments of Japan, Spain and Slovenia.

During the Opening Ceremony held this morning at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel, Minister Johnson Smith noted that, "We are meeting at time when our Community is at a pivotal inflection point. Our decisions will lay the foundation for the region's future, and we must determine our ability to thrive in spite of myriad and constantly evolving global international dynamics". In that context, she further observed that the COFCOR will "deliberate and strategize on the issues before us, with the ultimate goal of achieving the best possible opportunities and outcomes for our Community, in our engagements with hemispheric and global partners."

Speaking on the significance of the Meeting being held during the year-long commemoration of CARICOM's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Johnson Smith said, "Our CARICOM enjoys the distinction of being the longest surviving regional integration movement in the developing world. This anniversary demonstrates our resilience and is a milestone of which we can be justly proud."

In her remarks at the Opening Ceremony, CARICOM's Secretary-General said, "This gathering affords an opportunity for reflection and celebration of the Foreign Policy Coordination milestones that have supported the longevity and successes of our

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Community, as well as to acknowledge and refocus on those things we know we can do better”.

Jamaica will Chair the COFCOR from May 2023 to April 2024. The Twenty-Sixth Meeting is the first in-person regular meeting of the Council since 2019. Jamaica last chaired the COFCOR in 2009.

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