

## Antigua-Barbuda ambassador calls for Cuba to return to the OAS



WASHINGTON, USA 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015 -- Antigua and Barbuda's ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) Sir Ronald Sanders on Friday called for Cuba to "take its rightful seat in the Councils of the Organization" and said his country would do all in its power to encourage Cuba to do so.

The Antigua and Barbuda diplomat was delivering his inaugural statement to a fully-attended Permanent Council of the OAS in Washington.

Sanders said his government "looks forward to the universality of hemispheric representation in this body by the return of Cuba to our councils". He told the gathering, which included the ambassadors of the United States, Canada and all Latin American and Caribbean states, that he is "proud that, apart from Canada and Mexico, the countries of the Caribbean were the first to end the isolation of Cuba in this Hemisphere in 1972".

The Antigua and Barbuda representative said, "While it took 42 years since 1972 'to cut loose the anchor of failed policies of the past', today Cuba enjoys diplomatic relations with every member state of this Organisation."

"Cuba," he said, "must not now isolate itself from this body of which it is a founding member. My government calls on the Cuban government to take its rightful seat in the Council of the OAS."

Sanders' sentiments were supported by the ambassador of the United States, whose Secretary of State, John Kerry, was in Cuba to raise the American flag at the opening of the first embassy for five decades.

Cuba was suspended from the OAS in 1962 largely at the initiative of the US government that was pursuing a policy of isolating the Caribbean island. In June 2009, the OAS lifted the ban on Cuba but, so far, Cuba has not acted to re-join the Organisation. (see full text of the statement under "Lectures" in "Interviews and Lectures" section of this website.