

CARICOM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TO MEET THIS WEEK

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The roll-out of COVID-19 Vaccines will be among major matters for deliberation when CARICOM Heads of Government hold their Thirty-Second Inter-Sessional Meeting, under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley of Trinidad and Tobago, on the 24-25 February 2021.

Access to vaccines is regarded as crucial to curbing the spread of COVID-19 infections in the Region where many Member States have experienced increases in positive cases. The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) are expected to address the Heads on the pandemic. There will also be discussion on regional economic recovery and transformation.

The Heads of Government will examine the status of implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and any outstanding issues which need to be resolved to ensure that full benefits from the CSME are realised. The CSME is regarded as critical to the Region's strategy to build economic resilience, and it is felt that the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need to accelerate the pace of the integration process. The Meeting is also expected to consider recommendations from the CARICOM Commission on the Economy which was recently re-constituted and mandated to provide advice on implementable solutions to build resilience and push CARICOM economies along the path of sustainable growth and development.

The Meeting will also seek to advance the regional agenda on Food and Nutrition Security, which has become increasingly challenged by a number of factors including the COVID-19 pandemic with its disruptions to productivity and access to healthy foods.

Heads of Government will deliberate on the framework for a joint Tourism Policy for CARICOM which will, among other things, seek to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Region's tourism industry and the impact of tourism-related revenue reduction on the Region's overall economic performance.

The Meeting is expected to discuss CARICOM relations with the new United States Administration. It will also deliberate on matters related to Reparations and Regional Security.

Representatives of the regional Private Sector, Labour and Civil Society will be among delegates in attendance.

The CARICOM Chairman will hold a Press Conference at the end of the two-day meeting, which will be made available to the public on various broadcast and online platforms.



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