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Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

Media Release

National Seminar on **Taking Stock of India-Latin America and the Caribbean Relations**

(08-09 August 2019)

The Indian Council of World Affairs conducted a national seminar on **Taking Stock of India-Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Relations** on 08-09 August 2019.

The participants of the seminar included former diplomats and scholars from seven universities across India as also representatives of think tanks and industry chambers. The seminar comprised of four sessions namely India and Latin America and Caribbean Relations: Strengthening the Political Relationship; Building Complementarities in Trade, Investment and Development; Building Bridges through Cultural & Social Interactions; and Diaspora & Identities in India-LAC Relations. Heads of Missions and other officials from the various Missions of Latin America and Caribbean region also participated. The Inaugural Address was delivered by Shri V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs. The opening remarks were delivered by Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan, DG, ICWA, and the Keynote Address was given by H.E. Ms. Aashna Kanhai, Ambassador of Suriname to India.

The first session was chaired by **Mr. Deepak Bhojwani, former Ambassador of India to Colombia, Venezuela and Cuba**. The speakers in this session included Dr. Ravindranathan P., Assistant Professor in the Department of Geopolitics and

International Relations, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Dr. Aparajita Gangopadhyay, Head of Department, Department of International Relations, Goa University and UGC Centre for Latin American Studies, and Dr. Stuti Banerjee, Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs. The session discussed the need to build ties between India and the LAC region through engagements in such sectors as health, education, science and technology, nuclear energy, space cooperation, renewable energy and agriculture. It tried to address the role of South- South cooperation between India and Latin America and Caribbean nations, while understanding the political and economic interactions in the relations between India and the region.

The second session was chaired by **Mr. R. Vishwanathan, former Ambassador of India to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay**. The Speakers at the session included Mr. Hari Seshasayee, an independent scholar from Mumbai, Mr. Pranav Kumar, Director, International Trade Policy Division CII, India and Dr. Nitya Nanda, Senior Fellow and an Associate Director with TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute). The session assessed the potential sectors for enhanced trade and investments between India and the Latin America and Caribbean region in areas such as renewable and the need to increase India's interactions with regional economic organisations in the region.

The third session was chaired by **Mr. Akhilesh Mishra, Director General, Indian Council of Cultural Relations**. Speakers at the session included Dr Sonya Surabhi Gupta, Centre for European and Latin American Studies, Nelson Mandela House, Mujeeb Bagh, Jamia Millia Islamia, Dr. Aprajita Kashyap Assistant Professor, Centre for Canadian, US & Latin American Studies (JNU) and Prof Kavita Panjabi, Professor, Department of Comparative Literature Jadavpur University. The session highlighted the role of translation of literary work as an effective way of enhancing people to people contacts. It also traced the history of literary exchanges between India and the region especially the works of Rabindranath Tagore and Kabir along with Rodo and Marquez. The session also looked at the shared history and the role of decolonisation in developing the world views of India and the countries of the region.

The third session was chaired by **Mr. R. Rajagopalan Former High Commissioner to Guyana and Ambassador to Cuba**. Speakers at the session included Dr. Atanu Mohapatra, Chairperson, Centre for Diaspora Studies, Central University of Gujarat, Dr. Priti Singh, Associate Professor, Centre for Canadian, US & Latin American Studies (JNU) and Dr. Abdul Gaffar, Assistant Professor, Dhanamanjuri University, Manipur. The session pointed to the transnational nature of the diaspora of the LAC region and India and the need to tap into their experiences while also emphasizing the difference between the diaspora in the Caribbean and Latin America.

The concluding session was a Round Table Discussion, chaired by **Ms. Yojna Patel, Joint Secretary, (Latin America & Caribbean Division), MEA. Ambassador of Argentina, Ambassador of Chile, Ambassador of Cuba, Ambassador of El Salvador, High Commissioner of Guyana, Chargé d'affaires of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Ambassador of Panama** participated in the session among others. The aim of the session was to revitalise and re-energise the relations between India and LAC and recommendations were made towards this end.

