

Remarks by Consul General James R. Moore
to the 21st Annual Caribbean Regional Drug Commanders Conference
April 14, 2015, Curacao

His Excellency Minister of Justice Nelson Navarro; Curacao Police Commissioner Mauricio Sambo; Mr. James Doby, DEA Assistant Special Agent in Charge for the Caribbean District; and senior law enforcement officials from throughout the region: it is a great privilege to participate this morning in the opening of the 21st Annual Caribbean Regional Drug Commanders conference.

The U.S. Consulate General is delighted that Curacao was selected to host this year's conference.

Your very presence here demonstrates that combatting narcotics trafficking is a key objective for each and every one of your governments and law enforcement agencies.

I can assure you that the United States has no higher priority here in the Dutch Caribbean than interrupting the flow of illegal drugs and working with our partners to ensure that drug traffickers are brought to justice.

I can also assure you that the same is true our U.S. diplomatic missions throughout the region.

This is a shared undertaking – a joint effort – that cannot be successful if it is conducted in isolation.

Close cooperation and collaboration between local partners, regional partners, and international partners is absolutely essential if we are to succeed in disrupting the trafficking of illegal and dangerous narcotics.

As all of us know, drug trafficking breeds corruption, it fuels violent crime, and ultimately it can damage the fabric of our societies and ruin the lives of citizens, particularly youth, in our countries.

Recently, we have seen a sharp increase in the volume of cocaine moving through the Caribbean region. In fact, estimates indicated that it has tripled in the last four years, with the greatest quantities of cocaine passing through the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

For all these reasons, it is imperative that our countries work together to share drug-related intelligence and to develop joint strategies.

For example, in many of your countries, there are vetted units of law enforcement officers working hand-in-hand with their DEA partners. I believe this is a best practice, one that I hope will continue to grow in this region.

I mentioned that I'm especially pleased that the Caribbean Regional Drug Commanders Conference is being held in Curacao this year.

That is because of the very strong partnership we enjoy with local law enforcement and government officials here in the Dutch Caribbean. The United States deeply values its cooperation with local partners.

We also benefit from strong cooperation with our partners from the Netherlands, as well as from other international partners – countries in Caribbean and in South America, as well as from the United Kingdom and France, to name a few.

I'm very proud of our DEA colleagues here in Curacao. Under the leadership of Country Attache Greg Garza, they are an integral part of the U.S. Mission to the Dutch Caribbean.

In addition, they work effectively with local partners – both high-level and working level – in Curacao, Aruba, Sint Maarten, and the other islands of the Dutch Caribbean.

I am also proud of the strong synergy – including in the form of information sharing – that we have achieved between DEA, the U.S. Air Force Forward Operating Location, and our Dutch colleagues at the Parera Naval Base.

This type of synergy is another demonstration that when we work together, as partners pursuing shared objectives, we have a far greater chance of succeeding.

Welcome again to Curacao, and I wish you a productive and highly successful conference. I am confident that the next three days that you spend together will further deepen the cooperation among all the countries that are represented here this morning.

Thank you very much.