Chair of CONSLE promises the most robust systems of oversight and governance at meeting with IMPACS

Dr. the Honourable Errol Cort, Minister of National Security and Labour of Antigua and Barbuda and Chairman of the Caribbean Community’s Council of Ministers of National Security and Law Enforcement (CONSLE), met today via video conference with staff of the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) and its two sub agencies, to appraise them on the latest developments and to engage them in the process of restoring confidence, following a series of allegations in the press.

Sitting at his desk in Antigua, speaking simultaneously to those assembled at IMPACS Headquarters and the Regional Intelligence Fusion Center both in Trinidad and Tobago and the Joint Regional Communications Center in Barbados, the Minister dealt with matters relating to systems of accounting, auditing, internal control, procurement, human resource management and governance within the Regional Management Framework for Crime and Security. He also discussed the Sub-Committee set up by CONSLE to make recommendations on these matters to the next meeting of Heads of Government, scheduled to take place from the 1st to the 4th of July in St Kitts. At present this Committee is comprised of Ministers of National Security from Barbados, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Describing it as open ended, Dr. Cort called for the broadest possible participation. “The goal of this effort”, he said, “is to boost all elements of governance and oversight to ensure that the most robust systems will oversee the continuing development of the Region’s security Agenda.” Members of Staff were also invited to participate by making recommendations which would be considered by this body at its first meeting in Port of Spain on Monday the 20th of June.

The meeting noted that there were ways that IMPACS could improve its service delivery and knowledge of its activities across Member States as a great deal of the work presently carried out went unrecognized. Dr. Cort supported this assertion adding that “Member States needed to know how their contributions were being allocated.”
The Minister reminded the meeting that there will now be a diagnostic audit to be followed by financial audits for the period 2006 to 2010. He said that CONSLE was finalizing the team to conduct the diagnostic audit and that if there are any questions that remained after that, they would commission a full forensic audit. “No charges,” he said, “have been leveled against anyone”. “The actions taken thus far have been done to restore confidence in the regional crime and security framework and to ensure that IMPACS returns to respectability in the Region and among international entities”. He reiterated that IMPACS continues to have a critical role to play in the Community given the fact that crime is so pervasive that the community has had to declare security its fourth pillar alongside human and social development, foreign policy coordination and trade and economic development.

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