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Historic Leap for CARICOM as Four States Remove Barriers to Travel and Work

In a move hailed as a breakthrough for Caribbean unity, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have abolished visas, work permits, and stay limits for their citizens, advancing regional integration under the Treaty of Chaguaramas.

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Belize City waterfront, symbolizing the new era of free movement and regional unity among Barbados, Belize, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

At the beginning of October, four Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states implemented one of the long-elusive goals of the regional integration project: full freedom of movement between countries.

Nationals of Barbados, Belize, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines are now allowed to travel among the four countries without limitations on length of stay or restrictions on their ability to work – no visas, no work permits, no skills certificates required. They will also be able to access emergency and primary health care, alongside public primary and secondary education for the children, in the country in which they are staying.

The move is in keeping with the Enhanced Cooperation Protocol of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. The protocol allows for groups of at least three CARICOM nations to implement regional integration policies that go further than the current status quo. The decision by the four countries to open up to free movement among their nationals was ratified by the entire CARICOM body during the July 2025 Heads of Government meeting. Under the Enhanced Cooperation Protocol, other member states can join the initial four at a later date.

“We cannot speak about integration, we cannot speak about solidarity, and we cannot speak about coming together if we cannot move freely,” said Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerritt. “I’m hoping that the rest of us within the Caribbean Community can join the four of us who have taken this step to move forward with this.”

The new chapter in Caribbean integration comes amidst increasing uncertainty in traditional migration pathways. Over the last few years, changes to immigration policy in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States have made it more difficult for Caribbean nationals to seek opportunities in these countries. In the U.S., steep new fees for H-1B visa applications and proposals to severely restrict or eliminate Optional Practical Training (OPT) for recent international graduates may increase the demand for Caribbean professionals to stay within the region, seeking opportunities to live and work.

The full freedom of movement offered by Barbados, Belize, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to their citizens now makes that demand slightly easier to fulfill.