**Antigua OAS ambassador calls for comprehensive legal framework to deal with liability for oil spills**

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WASHINGTON, CMC – Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), Sir Ronald Sanders, has called for a more comprehensive international legal framework for dealing with liability for oil spills and ecological damage.

His call was made at the Permanent Council of the OAS on Wednesday during consideration of a declaration expressing the OAS's “distress at the serious environmental, economic, social and life and health consequences of the populations affected by oil spills in Peru since January 15, 2022”.

Antigua and Barbuda co-sponsored the Declaration with Peru and several other member states of the OAS.

Recalling that the January oil spill was the second such incident in nine years, originating from operations owned by the Spanish oil company, Repsol, Sanders said Antigua and Barbuda “welcomes an investigation of this incident and stands in solidarity with the Government of Peru in the expectation that whoever is found responsible for this oil spill will be held to account for reparation”.

The Peruvian President Pedro Castillo had earlier declared at a rally that his government would “sanction the company that's been polluting our sea”.

While Repsol, on this occasion, has engaged in cleaning up the spill of an estimated 11,000 barrels of oil, Sanders told the OAS: “We are also troubled that the Peruvian economy, especially its tourist industry, has been severely impacted since beaches have been damaged and are not usable.”

“All of this points to the need for a more comprehensive international legal framework for dealing with liability for oil spills and ecological damage. It also calls for more definitive agreements between oil companies and individual states for dealing effectively with ecological disasters of this kind,” Sanders argued, adding that the OAS should consider establishing machinery to provide legal and other assistance to small countries in negotiations with large oil companies.

The OAS Permanent Council unanimously adopted the declaration which appealed to international and regional financial and development institutions to provide emergency humanitarian aid to Peru.