

Presenter: Dr. Antonio Alleyne

Title: The Caribbean and China: Evolving Relations, A Caribbean Perspective

Abstract

This article examines the evolution of Caribbean–Chinese relations from a Caribbean perspective. It highlights the paradox of asymmetrical interdependence, where Caribbean states leverage Chinese partnerships for infrastructure, digital advancement and climate resilience, while navigating significant risks, including deepening trade deficits, concerns over debt sustainability, technological dependencies and US/Chinese geopolitical friction. The article contends that Caribbean agency hinges on developmental sovereignty—engaging simultaneously with the People’s Republic of China, the USA and the European Union (EU), collective bargaining power, and institutionalizing reciprocity mechanisms. Success requires the exploitation of engagements with China’s Belt and Road Initiative to drive structural economic transformation, aligned with the region’s vision of being, as Barbadian Prime Minister Errol Barrow put it in 1967, ‘friends of all, satellites of none’.