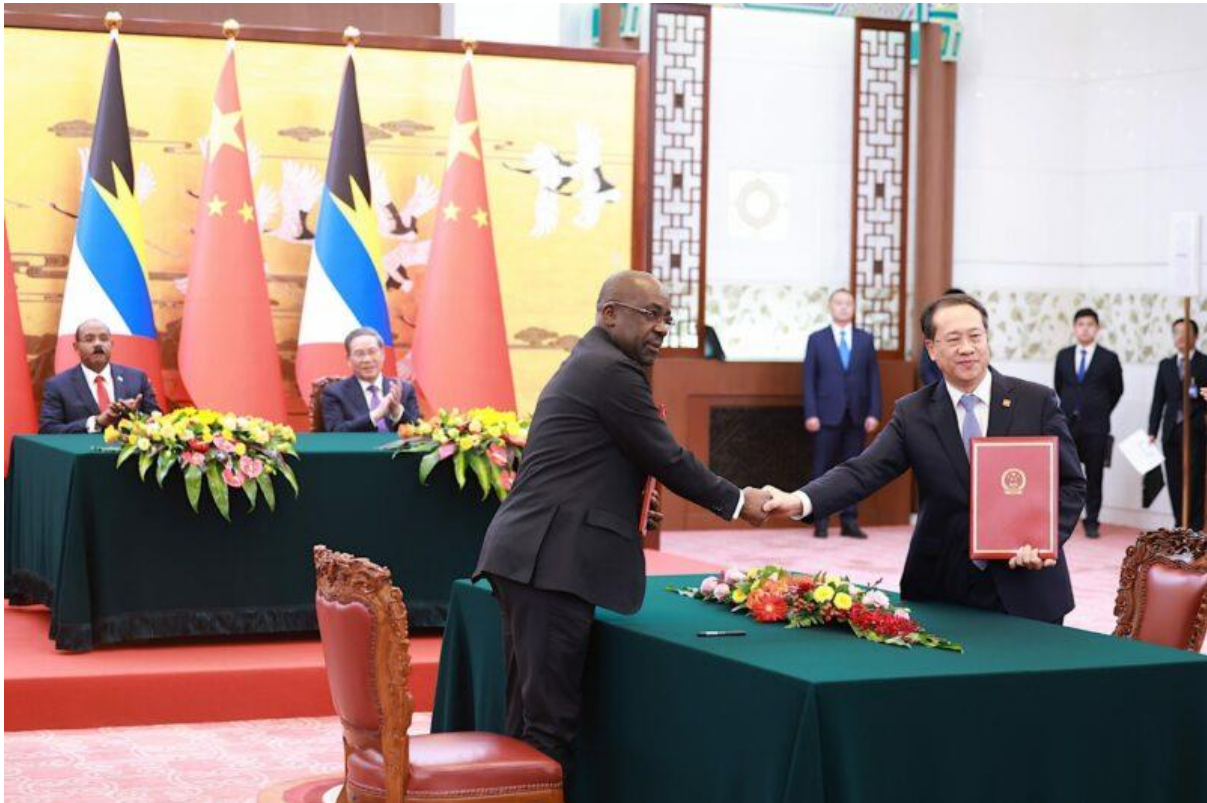


## Antigua & Barbuda and the Peoples Republic of China Forge Historic Maritime Transport Agreement, Paving the Way for Unprecedented Opportunities



In a landmark move that strengthens diplomatic ties and opens new horizons for global maritime trade, Antigua & Barbuda and the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) have signed a historic agreement on Maritime Transport. The signing ceremony, held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024, marks a pivotal moment in the collaboration between the two nations, promising significant advantages for ship owners and stakeholders in the maritime sector alike.

The agreement, negotiated with mutual understanding and shared vision, sets the stage for enhanced cooperation in maritime transport, creating a foundation for sustainable economic growth and development. Both Antigua & Barbuda and the PRC recognize the strategic importance of fostering a strong partnership to capitalize on the immense potential within the maritime industry.

Key Advantages for Ship Owners and Crews:

### 1. Preferential Treatment of Vessels in Port

- a. Antigua & Barbuda flagged vessels will enjoy a favourable treatment when calling at Chinese ports and will be charged the preferential rate for port tonnage dues. These rates provide a significant savings to visiting ships in the region of 28% on the tonnage dues.

- b. The agreement takes measures to facilitate and expedite maritime transport, to avoid unnecessary delay of vessels and simplify and expedite as much as possible, the relevant customs and other port formalities of vessels.
- c. The Certificates of Registry and other ship's documents held by Antigua & Barbuda flagged vessels will be recognised. Antigua & Barbuda vessels holding valid tonnage certificates will not be re-measured in PRC ports.

## **2. Preferential treatment of crew members**

- a. The agreement establishes the recognition of Antigua & Barbuda Seafarer's Book issued to crew members.
- b. Provision of shore leave to crew members including permission to enter, depart from or travel through the country for the purpose of boarding or repatriation.
- c. Any crew member who is admitted to hospital in the PRC has the right to stay as long as it is deemed necessary for the in-patient medical treatment and then return to his home country or proceed to another port to board the vessels.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Trade, and Barbuda Affairs, Honourable E. P. Chet Greene, and PRC Minister of Transport, Li Xiaopeng signed the Agreement on Maritime Transport on 24<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 in the presence of Prime Minister the Honourable Gaston Browne and PRC Premier Li Qiang.

Prime Minister Gaston Browne expressed his optimism and commitment to the successful implementation of the agreement. He highlighted the historic nature of this accord, underscoring its potential to shape the future of maritime transport between the two nations.

The Director and Registrar General of the Antigua and Barbuda Department of Marine Services and Merchant Shipping (ADOMS), the Maritime Administration of Antigua and Barbuda, Ambassador Dwight C.R. Gardiner OBE said, "I am pleased to affirm that the recently signed Agreement on Maritime Transport with the People's Republic of China heralds a new era for ship owners registering their vessels with us. Our commitment to excellence in maritime services and our constant endeavour to find new and innovative ways to serve our customers, reinforces the appeal of Antigua and Barbuda as the preferred flag State to ship owners seeking a secure, streamlined, and globally competitive registry. This partnership enhances the reputation of Antigua and Barbuda as a flag State, solidifying our dedication to fostering growth, innovation, and collaboration in the international shipping industry."

ADOMS is responsible for the Ship & Yacht Registry with its principal office located in St. Johns, Antigua and supported by offices in Germany, Greece, Malta, the United Arab Emirates and Miami, USA.

As the maritime industry stands on the cusp of transformation, the Agreement on Maritime Transport exemplifies the power of international cooperation to create opportunities that benefit not only the involved nations but also the global community at large. This historic agreement signals a new era of collaboration and progress in the maritime sector.