ACS Hosts 33rd Meeting of Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism

The Association of Caribbean States convened the 33rd Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism on the 30th of August, 2022 under the leadership of the Republic of Nicaragua as the 2022-2023 Chair of the Special Committee. Under the theme 'Reframing Regional Tourism Competitive Advantage', the meeting included a Tourism Stakeholder Session in the morning which provided a contextualization of the current tourism landscape. The meeting concluded with a closed working session in the afternoon, providing Members States and Associate Members with the information necessary to examine and approve a work programme for the 2022-2023 period during the closed session.

During the opening ceremony, the meeting heard remarks from Chair, Dr. Anasha Campbell, the ACS Secretary General; H.E. Rodolfo Sabonge and Director Safiya Horne-Bique of the Directorate for Trade and Sustainable Development. The Chair urged the meeting to review the significant efforts that have been made recently and to consider the new Plan of Action of the ACS for the six-year implementation period as an avenue to create a joint space for work in the Greater Caribbean with the end of becoming the most chosen destinations. The Secretary General highlighted the need for a recalibration exercise as a direct response to changing expectations that pandemic incurred. He explained that this recalibration is clearly defined in the recently approved Plan of Action of the ACS. The Director took the opportunity to underline the recovery that the regional tourism industry has made and encouraged participants to build on this recovery using an integration approach. She underscored the need for regional integration as the foundation for continued advancement of the industry.

In setting the context for the Stakeholder Session, Mr. Machel Pantin- Associate Economic Affairs Officer, Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean of ECLAC, provided an overview of the regional tourism industry, taking into account key industry trends that defines the current industry situation. Based on the trends presented, Mr. Pantin provided the meeting with six (6) recommendations that will support continued recovery.

The overview was followed by a presentation on the rise of the digital tourist office, where Mr. Martínez looked at the virtues of a virtual tourism office, where technology can be leveraged to

adapt to the modern tourist with enhanced experiences to boost a destination's tourism activity. Mr. Comito presented on the issue of integrating assessment of barriers to STE resilience. He presented on trends that are enabling Caribbean STE development and the findings of the CHTA Caribbean Tourism Industry performance, outlook and issues survey.

Participants reflected on the meeting through interactive and robust discussions with the objective of identifying key strategic actions necessary for a competitive and innovative sustainable tourism industry.

For more information please contact the Directorate of Trade and Sustainable Development: dtsddirect@acs-aec.org.