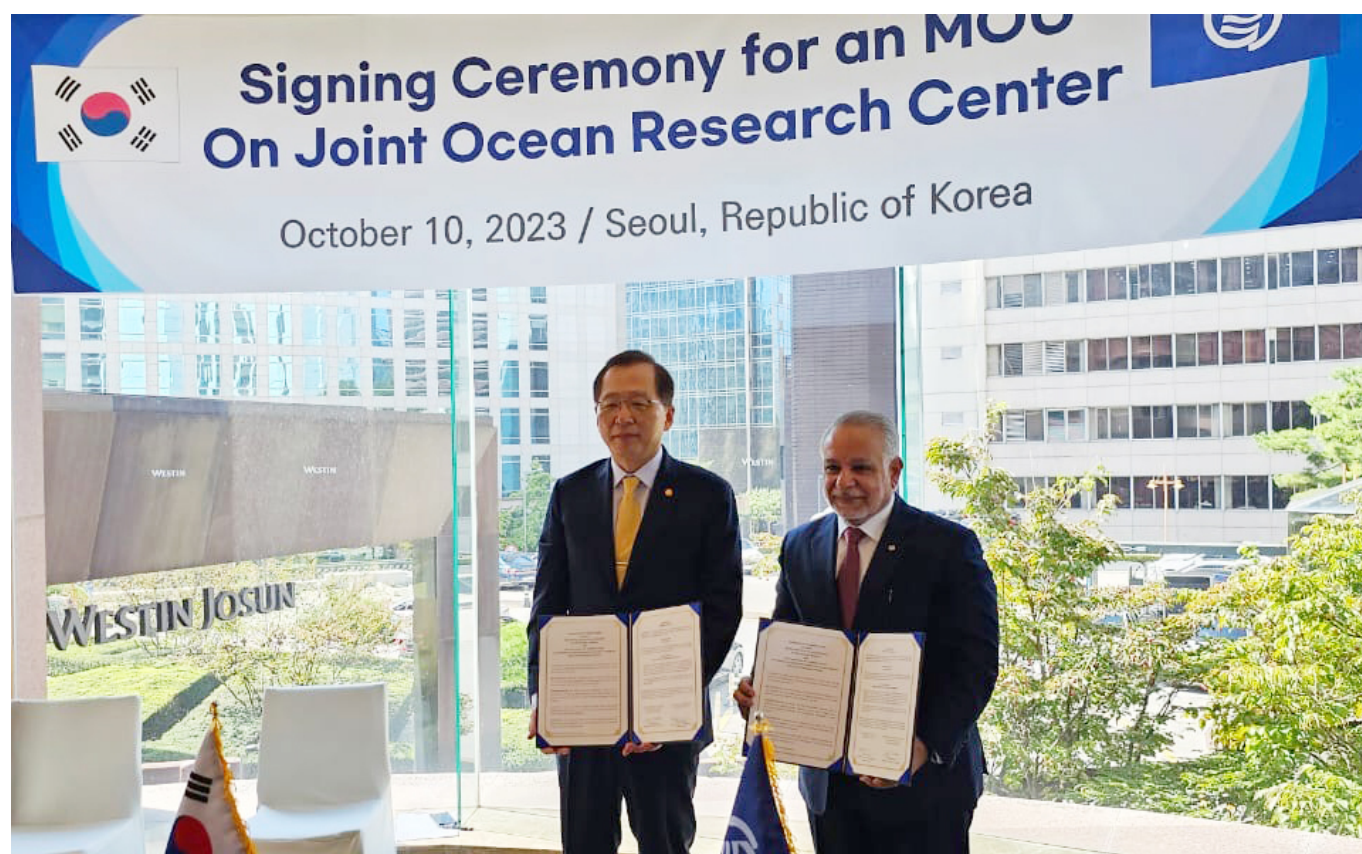


**The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea (MOF) convene the Korea-Caribbean Joint Ocean Research Center at 13th High-Level Forum on the Korea-Caribbean Partnership**



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THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS) AND THE MINISTRY OF OCEANS AND FISHERIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (MOF) CONVENE THE KOREA-CARIBBEAN JOINT OCEAN RESEARCH CENTER AT THE 13TH HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON THE KOREA-CARIBBEAN PARTNERSHIP

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago - In the framework of the 13th High-Level Forum on the Korea-Caribbean Partnership, ACS Secretary General, Rodolfo Sabonge, and the Minister of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, CHO Seung-Hwan, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on October 10, 2023. This MoU paves the way for the establishment of the Korea-Caribbean Joint Ocean Research Center to promote cooperation in marine science and technology between the Korea and the Greater Caribbean region.

The Research Center will take a multifaceted role with its core focus being identifying and executing joint research projects, fostering knowledge sharing and capacity building and establishing regional networks for marine sector cooperation. Its mission is to make meaningful contributions to the advancement of a sustainable blue economy and the development of an action plan dedicated to reinforcing environmental resilience.

Secretary General Sabonge, during his address at the 13th High-Level Forum on the Korea-Caribbean Partnership, referred to the Research Center as one of the key areas on which future

collaborative efforts will be focused. He also stressed that expanding the Sandy Shorelines project and addressing the challenges posed by the sargassum influx will be a priority in this partnership. The Sandy Shorelines project underscores the history of cooperation between the ACS and Korea and has made a significant impact on disaster risk reduction and preservation of the region's coastlines during its initial phase. Notable achievements include the establishment of a Video Monitoring Tower in Jamaica, a Beach Rehabilitation Guidebook for the Greater Caribbean Countries, and a Coastal Erosion Monitoring Network.

Within the context of the Forum, Secretary General Sabonge attended a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, the Honorable Park Jin.

Further, the Secretary General paid a visit to the President of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Yoon Suk Yeol. This testament to the growing strength of the ACS-Korea partnership highlights their active collaboration in advancing sustainable development within the Greater Caribbean Region.

Korea informed of their interest in hosting Expo 2030, an initiative that reflects a shared commitment to building a better future. In this regard, the ACS Secretary General expressed profound gratitude to Korea for its unwavering support and provision of technical assistance in advancing the Greater Caribbean Region. The Association awaits the Korea Ocean Economy Initiative (K-OEI), an international cooperation programme aimed at finding practical solutions to ocean-related challenges and driving attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The ACS, in the spirit of continued partnership and dialogue, extended an invitation to the Republic of Korea to participate in its 8th International Cooperation Conference, scheduled for May 8, 2024. This annual gathering offers a robust platform for in-depth discussions on ACS projects, initiatives, and programmes. The ACS acknowledges the instrumental role that development partners, such as the Republic of Korea, have played in its accomplishments and remains committed to a shared and promising future.