



ACS INITIATIVES



COOPERATION ♦ DEVELOPMENT ♦ SUCCESS





Association of Caribbean States
Asociación de Estados del Caribe
Association des Etats de la Caraïbe

Alfonso David Múnera Cavadía
Secretary General of the
Association of Caribbean States

Julio Orozco
Director of Sustainable Tourism

Alberto Durán
Director of Trade Development
and External Economic Relations

George Nicholson
Director of Transport and
Disaster Risk Reduction

Paula Velásquez Lange
Political Adviser

Natasha George
Legal Adviser

Marissa Alexander
Finance Manager

Michelle Garcia
Communications Officer



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THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

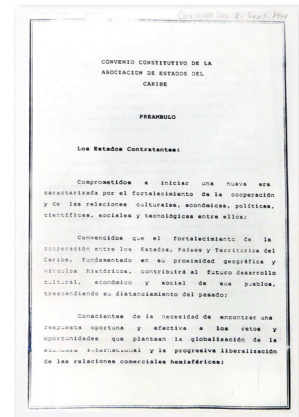


Against the backdrop of creating a new era of regional integration characterized by the strengthening of cooperation, the Convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was signed on July 24th, 1994 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. As enshrined in this Convention, the Association is an organization for consultation, cooperation and concerted action, whose purpose is to identify and promote the implementation of policies and programmes of the Greater Caribbean. The convention entered into force on August 4th, 1995. The focal areas include Trade, Transport, Sustainable Tourism and Disaster Risk Reduction. Other areas of special interest are the

Caribbean Sea Commission, Special Fund, Culture, Science and Technology.

The Greater Caribbean (a political concept created by the ACS) touches the shores of North, Central and South America. It goes from the Yucatan Peninsula to the Guianas, circling the Greater and Lesser Antilles, and comprising the islands located in a place where the currents run into the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. It goes from The Bahamas through Trinidad & Tobago.

Historical and cultural similarities are elements that shorten the distances that separate this great Region, which is marked by physical dispersion, amalgamating a



Certified copy of the Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States kept in the Genaro Estrada Historical Archive of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

7th Extraordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council, Mérida, Mexico, April 29 2014.

variety of peoples with beliefs, languages, and customs, which despite their differences, share the heritage of the Caribbean Sea and a history that connects the Member Countries.

This intergovernmental Association proposes the development of programmes that would contribute to the strengthening of our common identity, the protection of our cultural diversity and social and economic progress based on the richness of our cultures and on the strengths of our education systems.



Media coverage of the Inaugural Summit of the Association of Caribbean States, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, August 1995.



From left to right: **Noor Hassanali**, President of Trinidad & Tobago, **Patrick Manning**, Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, and the first Secretary General of ACS, **Simon Molina Duarte**, at the First ACS Summit, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, August 15 1995.

Since its foundation, six Summits have been held by Heads of State and/or Government. The leaders have met in Port of Spain (1995), Santo Domingo (1999), Margarita Island (2001), Panama City (2005), Pétion Ville (2013), and Mérida (2014). The Fifth and Sixth Summits are further detailed in this booklet.

15th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council,
Panama City, Panama,
November 27 2003.



Norman Girvan, Secretary General of the ACS, with the President of France, Jacques Chirac.



5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government
in Pétion Ville, Haiti,
April 26 2013.





**Headquarters
of the ACS**
in Port of Spain,
Trinidad &
Tobago.

SECRETARIES GENERAL OF THE ACS, 1995-2014

Period	Secretary General	Country
1995-2000	Simón Molina Duarte	Venezuela
2000-2004	Norman Girvan	Jamaica
2004-2008	Rubén Arturo Silié Valdez	Dominican Republic
2008-2012	Luis Fernando Andrade Falla	Guatemala
2012-2016	Alfonso Múnera	Colombia

In 2014 the Association commemorated twenty years since its establishment. This celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the foundation of the ACS presented an excellent opportunity to look back over the path taken thus far, and to revitalize the Association with a view to consolidating and maintaining its relevance as an entity for consultation, functional cooperation, and concerted action in the Greater Caribbean.



Alfonso Múnera,
Secretary General
of the ACS, during
an official visit to
the President of
Trinidad & Tobago,
George Maxwell,
March 11 2012.



MEMBERS OF THE ACS



CARICOM

Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Surinam and Trinidad & Tobago.



CENTRAL AMERICA

Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.



GROUP OF THREE

Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela.



NON GROUPED MEMBERS

Cuba, Dominican Republic and Panama.



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Aruba, Curaçao, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Sint Maarten, France (on behalf of French Guiana, St. Barthélemy & Saint Martin) and The Netherlands (on behalf of Bonaire, Saba, and Sint Eustatius).



-
- A detailed map of the Caribbean region. The map shows the following countries and territories:
- North America:** Mexico (green), Belize (red), Guatemala (orange), Honduras (orange), El Salvador (orange), Nicaragua (orange), Costa Rica (orange), Panama (yellow).
 - Caribbean Sea:** The central body of water, labeled in blue.
 - South America:** Venezuela (green), Colombia (green), Guyana (red), Suriname (red), French Guiana (dark blue), Brazil (black).
 - Islands and Territories:**
 - The Bahamas:** Labeled in red, including New Providence, Nassau, and other islands.
 - Cuba:** Labeled in yellow, including Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and other cities.
 - Cayman Islands:** Labeled in green, including George Town.
 - Jamaica:** Labeled in red, including Kingston.
 - Haiti:** Labeled in red, including Port-au-Prince.
 - Dominican Republic:** Labeled in yellow, including Santo Domingo.
 - Puerto Rico:** Labeled in white, including San Juan.
 - British Virgin Islands:** Labeled in white, including Road Town.
 - US Virgin Islands:** Labeled in white, including Charlotte Amalie.
 - Antigua and Barbuda:** Labeled in white, including Antigua.
 - Barbados:** Labeled in red, including Bridgetown.
 - Saint Lucia:** Labeled in red, including Castries.
 - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:** Labeled in red, including Kingstown.
 - Grenada:** Labeled in red, including St. George's.
 - Trinidad and Tobago:** Labeled in red, including Port of Spain.
 - Aruba:** Labeled in green, including Oranjestad.
 - Surrounding Bodies of Water:**
 - Gulf of Mexico:** Labeled in blue.
 - Atlantic Ocean:** Labeled in blue.
 - Pacific Ocean:** Labeled in blue.
 - Scale:** A scale bar at the bottom left indicates 0 to 300 miles.



OUR REGION

Population

The total population of ACS Member Countries is 280 million inhabitants. If we only take into account the population of the Caribbean regions of Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela, then over 120 million people live in the Caribbean basin (of which 44

million live on the islands). This population is characterized by great ethnic and cultural diversity, combining indigenous origins, European colonialism (Spanish, English, French, Dutch and Portuguese), and various migrations, both forced and voluntary, of African, Amerindian, Asian (India, China and Java) and Middle Eastern (Syrian, Lebanese, Jewish) peoples.

School students
in Havana,
Cuba.



Languages

Linguistic diversity is a distinguishing characteristic. People in the Caribbean speak Spanish, French, English, Dutch, Creole languages of African origin, and indigenous languages. Caribbean islanders in low income settings often speak Creole and their indigenous languages on a daily basis.



Culture

The Greater Caribbean is also a creative space for a rich and diverse range of cultural products. Several winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature and other authors have emerged here and have been inspired by this Region.

Haitian painting has won international recognition in numerous European and American art galleries, while the Region's cuisine has blossomed as a fusion of indigenous, Spanish, English, French, Dutch and African recipes and ingredients.

The Region's music is the best-known cultural product and the one with the greatest popularity worldwide. The Caribbean is home to a variety of dance styles and rhythms: calypso, reggae, salsa, son, merengue and cumbia are some of the local creations that have achieved widespread international acclaim. Festivals and carnivals are another deeply-rooted form of cultural expression in the Caribbean. They bring together music, dance, costumes and performance. The Carnival in Trinidad & Tobago is the best known, and is considered one of the most attractive cultural events in the Region.



Immigrants from India
preserve their traditions
through song and music.



Haitian painting.



Djembe, a percussion
instrument originally
from West Africa.



**Trinidad &
Tobago
Carnival**



OUR STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) comprises a structure of standing bodies aimed at promoting, consolidating and strengthening regional cooperation. The main Association bodies are the Ministerial Council and the General Secretariat.

The ACS works through Directorates and Special Committees to address issues that Member Countries have identified as priorities for the Region (Sustainable Tourism, Trade Development and External Economic Relations, Transport and Disaster Risk Reduction), along with other bodies, such as the Council of National Representatives of the Special Fund and the Caribbean Sea Commission. The Committees and the Commission also comprise working groups and subcommittees.

MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

This is the main governing body of the ACS, which sets out the policies to be provided for in the Articles establishing the ACS and in the Declarations of the Heads of State. Its functions include monitoring the operation of the General Secretariat; appointing the Secretary General; forming Special Committees; deciding on matters of membership; calling Summits, and approving work plans and budgets, among others.

It holds an Annual Ordinary Meeting and a follow-up Intersessional Meeting. The Board (consisting of a Chairman, two Vice Chairmen and a Rapporteur) guides and monitors the implementation of the work program.



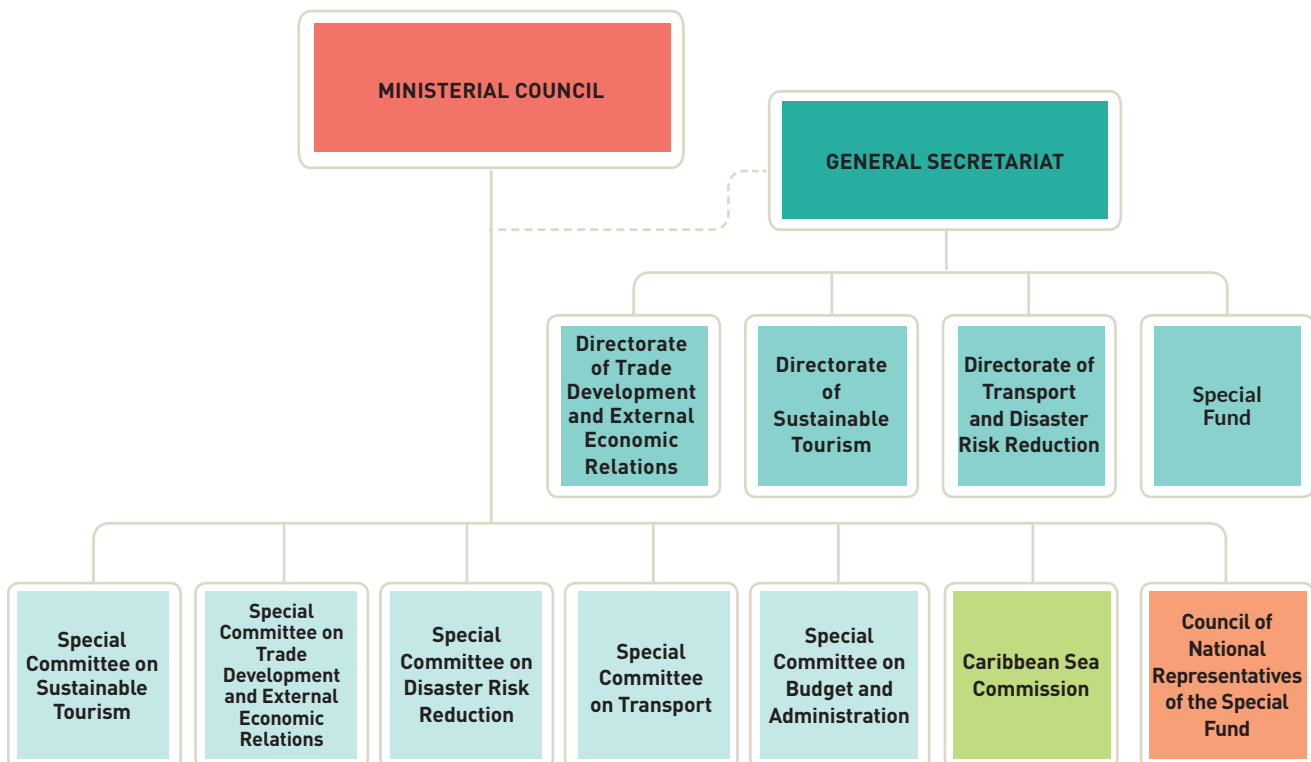
GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The role of the General Secretariat is to implement the mandates arising from the meetings of the Ministerial Council. The Secretary General is nominated by the Ministerial Council from among the main groups that integrate the ACS, for a period of four years.

The Secretary General deals with developing and maintaining political relations and co-operation with Member Countries, Associate Member Countries, Observers and third parties, and is responsible for ensuring the operation of the Association and its financial management, among other activities.

19th Annual Meeting of the Ministerial Council,
Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, February 14 2013.

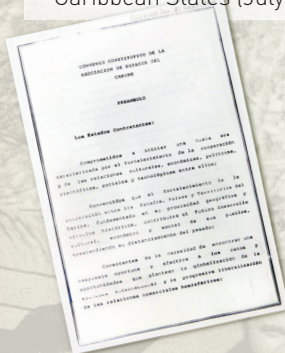
Organigram of the ACS



TIMELINE

Significant events in the history of the ACS

- **Signing of the Convention in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia,** that established the Association of Caribbean States (July 24)



1994



- **Inaugural Summit of Heads of State and/or Government** in Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago (August 17-18)

1995



- Election of **Simón Molina Duarte** as Secretary General of the ACS

- 1st Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council in Guatemala City, Guatemala (December 1)

1997



- **Signing of the Agreement on the location of the ACS headquarters** with the Government of Trinidad & Tobago (August 27)

1998

- Proposal that the Caribbean Sea be internationally recognized as a **special area in the context of sustainable development**



- **Agreement for Regional Cooperation on Natural Disasters** (April 17)

- **2nd Summit of Heads of State and/or Government** in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (April 16-17)

- **Creation of the Special Committee on Natural Disasters** (December 13)

- **Protocol on Privileges and Immunities** (December 13)

- Beginning of the program entitled **Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea** (December 13)

- **Adoption of resolution A/RES/54/225** "Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development" by the UN General Assembly (December 22)

- **Declaration of Principles and Guidelines for Special and Differential Treatment for Small Economies in the Context of the FTAA** (September 5)

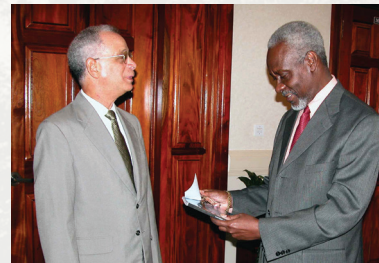
- **3rd Summit of Heads of State and/or Government** in Margarita Island, Venezuela (December 11-12)



- **Convention Establishing the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean** (December 12)

1999

- Election of **Norman Girvan** as Secretary General of the ACS



Norman Girvan, Secretary General of the ACS, during an official visit to the Prime Minister of Jamaica, **Percival James Patterson**, February 5-10 2003.

- **1st edition of the Greater Caribbean Business Forum** (October 19-20)

2001

- **Protocol to the Convention Establishing the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean** (February 12)

- **Transport Agreement between the ACS Member States and Associate Members** (February 12)

- Election of **Rubén Arturo Silié Valdez** as Secretary General of the ACS



Inauguration of the third Secretary General of the ACS, Rubén Silié, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, January 3 2004.

2004

- **4th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government** in Panama City, Panama (July 29)



2005



- Creation of the **Caribbean Sea Commission**

2006

- Election of **Luis Fernando Andrade Falla** as Secretary General of the ACS



Luis Fernando Andrade Falla, Secretary General of the ACS, during an official visit to the President of Trinidad & Tobago, **George Maxwell Richards**, March 20 2008.

2007

- Beginning of project **Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean**

- **High-Level Conference on Disaster Reduction** in Saint-Marc, Republic of Haiti (November 14-16)



2008

- Entry into force of the **Transportation Agreement between the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS** (September 19)

- **Adoption of resolution A/RES/61/197**: "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations" by the UN General Assembly (December 19)

2010

- Startup of the project **Strengthening Hydrometeorological Operations and Services in the SIDS (Small Island Developing States) of the Caribbean (SHOCS)**

- **5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government** in Pétion Ville, Haiti (April 26)



Michel Martelly, President of Haiti, and the President of Mexico, **Enrique Peña Nieto**, during the 5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government in Pétion Ville, Haiti, April 26 2013.

- Entry into force of the **Convention Establishing the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean** (November 6, during Mexico's *pro tempore* chairmanship)



2012

- Election of **Alfonso Múnera Cavadía** as Secretary General of the ACS



Inauguration of the fifth Secretary General of the ACS, Alfonso Múnera Cavadía, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, April 13, 2012.

- **Dialogue to identify existing trade opportunities between Member States of the Greater Caribbean Region** (July 11-12)

2013

- Entry into force of the **Agreement for Regional Cooperation on Natural Disasters** (March 31. This agreement was promoted by Mexico during its presidency of the Ministerial Council for the 2013 period)

- **6th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government** in Mérida, Mexico (April 30)



2014



SUMMITS OF THE ACS



SUMMITS OF HEADS OF STATE OF THE ACS, 1995-2014

Nº	Venue	Date	Outcome/Goals
I	Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago	08/17-18/1995	Priorities were identified to promote regional cooperation and coordination between ACS Member States and Associate Members.
II	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic	04/16-17/1999	Progress between the first and second Summits was analyzed, and the projection of the Caribbean Region to the 21 st century was determined.
III	Margarita Island, Venezuela	12/11-12/2001	Consolidation of the Greater Caribbean identity was promoted to strengthen the ACS as a forum for consultation, cooperation, and concerted action.
IV	Panama City, Panama	07/29/2005	Reflection on the evolution of the ACS, its achievements, and challenges during its 10 th anniversary.
V	Pétion Ville, Haiti	04/26/2013	Discussion of the measures used to strengthen and revitalize the ACS, and maintain its relevance.
VI	Mérida, México	04/30/2014	Commemoration of the 20 th anniversary and a debate of new initiatives to benefit the Greater Caribbean.



6th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government in Mérida, México, April 30 2014.



3rd Summit of Heads of State and/or Government in Margarita Island, Venezuela, December 12 2001.



5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government in Pétiön Ville, Haiti, April 26 2013.

4th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government in Panama City, Panama, July 29 2005.





**5th Summit
of Heads of
State and/or
Government**
in Pétion Ville,
Haiti, April 26
2013.

5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the ACS

Pétion Ville, Haiti hosted the 5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the Association of Caribbean States in 2013 under the theme “Revitalizing the vision of the Association of Caribbean States for a stronger and more united Greater Caribbean”.

The Summit sought to effectively strengthen regional collaboration and integration among member bodies whose connections

are not solely rooted to the geographic location, that is, the bordering of the Caribbean Sea, but whose people share a deep historical and socio-cultural bond.

The Heads of State ratified the founding vision and principles of the Association, pledging to consolidate and promote them. They noted the progress made towards the revitalization of the Association in the Declaration of Pétion Ville.

Furthermore, in this Declaration, they expressed their decision to maintain the relevance of the organisation as a body for consultation, concerted action and cooperation, while stressing the importance of its work in the domains of Trade, Sustainable Tourism, Transport, Disaster Risk Reduction, the Caribbean Sea, Education and Culture. The Declaration was signed and approved by ACS Member Countries at the conclusion of the 5th Summit.



6th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the ACS

The most recent Summit of the ACS, held in Mérida, Mexico, in 2014 commemorated the 20th Anniversary of the Association and bore the theme “In celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Association of Caribbean States; ACS 20/20: Present and Future”.

At this Summit, all Heads reaffirmed the Association’s value as an important, necessary and timely space for exchange and co-operation in the interest of progress in the Greater Caribbean.

During the Summit, the President of Mexico went on to outline four co-operation projects sponsored by his Government:

- i. Caribbean Territorial Information Platform for Disaster Prevention.
- ii. Caribbean Geospatial Information Infrastructure Strengthening Project.
- iii. International Transit of Goods (TIM) in the Greater Caribbean.



Alfonso Múnera,
Secretary
General
of the ACS.

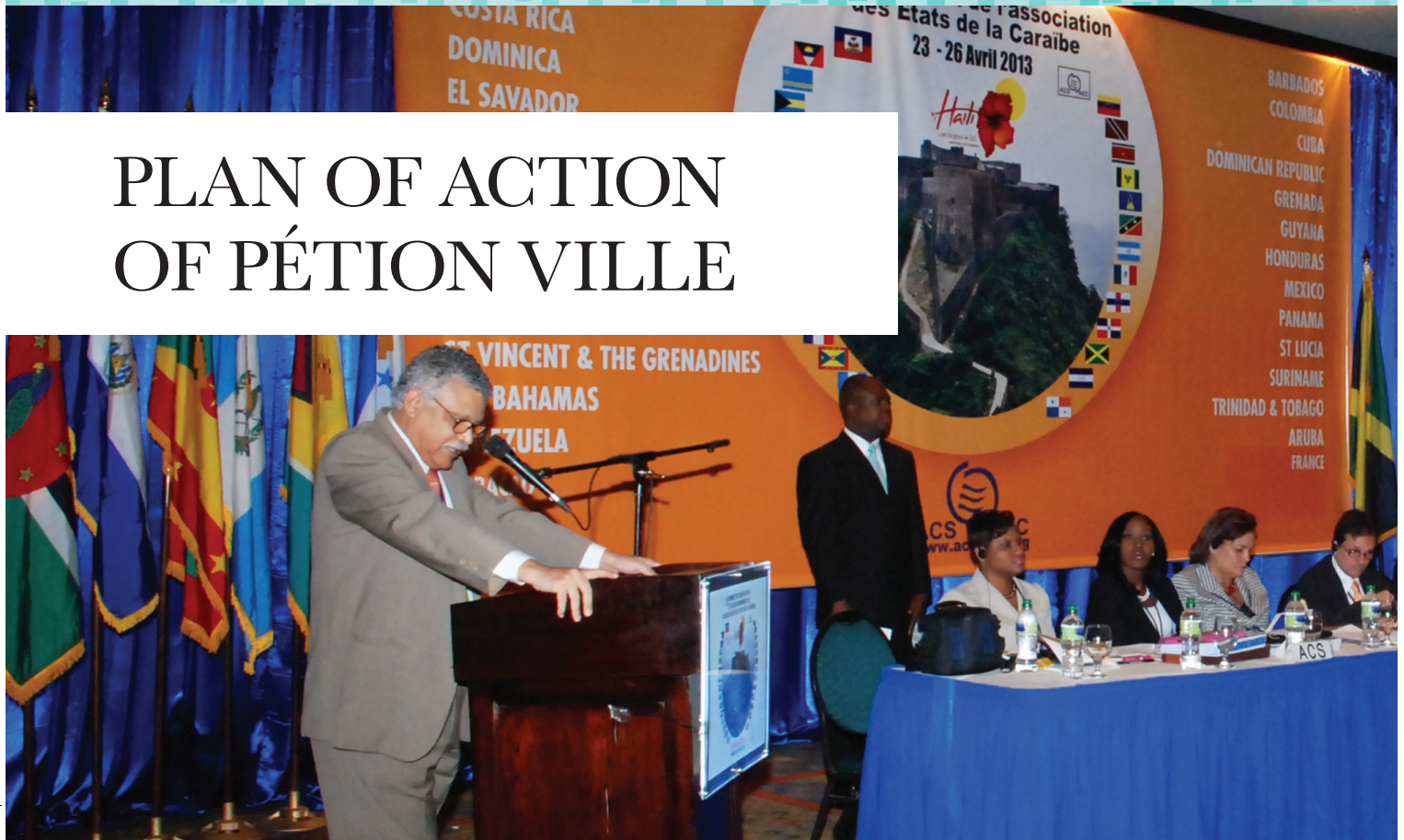
- iv. Interconnectivity for enhancing Trade Facilitation and Short Distance Maritime Transport in the Greater Caribbean (SDMT).

In addition to these four projects resulting from the Summit, the Declaration of Mérida was signed by 31 countries and reiterated “the permanence of the Association of Caribbean States as a special space for dialogue and cooperation in order to make strides in Latin American and Caribbean integration”.

**6th Summit
of Heads of
State and/or
Government** in
Mérida, Yucatán,
México, April 30
2014.



PLAN OF ACTION OF PÉTION VILLE



PRIORITY AREA

MANDATE

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

I. Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC)

The STZC has been identified "as a geographically determined cultural, socio-economic and biologically rich and diverse unit, in which tourism development will depend on the sustainability and the principles of integration, co-operation and consensus, aimed at facilitating the integrated development of the Greater Caribbean".

II. Annual Regional Tourism Safety and Security Capacity-building Seminar

This project entails the hosting of a Regional Tourist Safety and Security Capacity Building Workshop.



The Plan of Action of Pétion Ville established a specific direction in which the organisation is intended to proceed. It outlined key activities in the pillars and other special areas of the Association. The specifics of the activities under each of the categories that the Association is expected to achieve during the period 2013–2015 are outlined below.

PRIORITY AREA

MANDATE



SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM

III. Implementation of a tourism policing project

This project entails the hosting of a Seminar and the implementation of a project to develop a Tourism Policing Program.

IV. Establishment of the Centre for the Promotion of Languages and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean (CPLC)

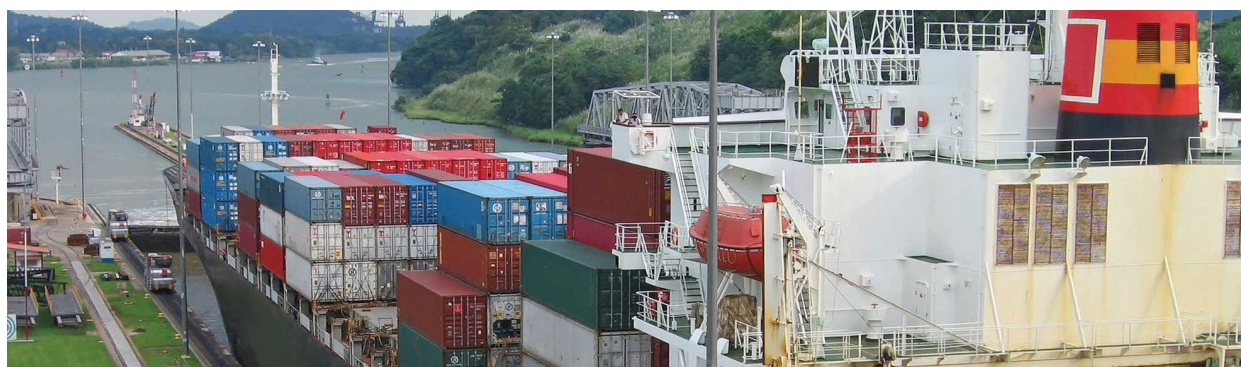
The objective of this project is to prioritize the implementation of student exchange programs among the countries of the ACS for language training and cultural immersion.

V. Forum of Airline and Tourism Executives for the Promotion of Multi-Destination Tourism in the Greater Caribbean

Hosting of a forum to gather Tourism and Aviation Industry Leaders and High-level Authorities to discuss important matters pertaining to connectivity, intra-regional travel, immigration facilitation and the opportunities and challenges facing the Region.

VI. Cruise Tourism and Entrepreneurial Strengthening in the Greater Caribbean: Opportunities for Women

This project is aimed at developing a Framework for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Training and Capacity-building Programme.



PRIORITY AREA

MANDATE



TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

I. Elimination and reduction of obstacles and challenges to trade facilitation within the Greater Caribbean Region

This project will focus on holding Technical Meetings of the Working Groups on Customs Facilitation and the Issuance of Business Visas; and the promotion of the implementation of the UNCTAD E-Regulations Programme.

II. Convening of an annual Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean, as well as the Forum of Trade Promotion Organizations

With these two fora, it is anticipated that trade, investment, and the exchange of knowledge will be promoted among businessmen, business-women and entrepreneurs of the Greater Caribbean.

III. The promotion of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Greater Caribbean

This project is designed mainly to create and expand job opportunities, and alleviate unemployment in the countries of the ACS.

IV. The empowering of women through trade

Hosting of an Annual Seminar in order to promote from a gender perspective, the strengthening of capabilities of women entrepreneurs.

V. Promotion of the convergence and deepening of trade within the ACS through new schemes

This project seeks to update the study on the actual and potential flow of trade in the ACS Region, and the identification, compilation and execution of existing and new related cooperation activities within the Region.

VI. The strengthening of the Caribbean Development Bank (CARIBANK)

CARIBANK will seek to expand its participation and activities in all countries of the ACS.



PRIORITY AREA

MANDATE



TRANSPORT

I. Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean

This project seeks to increase intraregional maritime trade and foster external links by creating an updated map of maritime routes in the Greater Caribbean, to allow exporters, importers, vendors or buyers, both internationally and regionally to know when, how, through which operators and under what conditions they may transport their goods.

II. The Port and Maritime Strategy of the Greater Caribbean

This project examines current and future trends in the port and maritime arena in the Caribbean basin, and will propose a plan of strategic actions to guarantee sustained port development, which would meet the expectations of the Region and ensure that it enjoys global competitive status.

III. Air Transport Agreement among Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States

This Agreement will meet the need of implementing a general aviation policy for the Greater Caribbean, establishing a legal and co-operation framework that would offer more air service options with the reduction of costs and prices, more routes, more carriers and improved services; as well as ensuring the highest levels of operating security and safety for international civil aviation.

IV. Commercial Co-operation Partnerships and Alliances among the Airlines of ACS Countries

This project seeks to encourage the creation, development and promotion of policies to facilitate through code sharing agreements and operating agreements in order to increase the networks of routes and connections in the Greater Caribbean.

V. Marine pollution

The ACS should take the necessary measures for the prevention of marine pollution as recommended by the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Information and Training Center for the Wider Caribbean (RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe) based in Curaçao.



PRIORITY AREA

MANDATE

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

I. **Strengthening Hydro-meteorological Operations and Services in the Caribbean SIDS –Small Island Developing States**

The project is expected to result in improved capacity of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) to provide weather and climate services and improved capacity of the NMHSs and Disaster Management Agencies (DMAs) for the governance of the early warning process.

II. **Green Response to Disasters**

This project seeks to develop standards and regulations that Caribbean governments and people can incorporate, to promote and facilitate the production and utilization of eco-efficient products, tools and processes to be utilized for responding to, and recovering from, disasters impacting on their country.

III. **Online Diploma on the Management of Disaster Risk Reduction**

This Diploma, developed by the Advanced School of Public Administration in Colombia and shared with Member and Associate Member States of the ACS, will seek to give representatives of ACS Member States, greater knowledge on the issue in the Region and on the implementation of mechanisms for exchanging experiences, strategies, tools and training.

IV. **Broadcast of the radio soap opera “The Rough Season”**

The objective of this Soap Opera is to sensitize the Caribbean Population and improve their reactions to meteorological phenomena, while increasing their knowledge. To this end, it is expected to translate the radio soap opera into French and Spanish, as it is already available in English, so that it can be broadcasted throughout the Greater Caribbean Region.

V. **Plan to reduce vulnerability to disasters**

The ACS plans to contribute to the development of a plan to reduce vulnerability to disasters associated with natural phenomena, from the provisions of the Plan of Action of Saint Marc, the Framework for Action of Hyogo and other instruments related to this subject that are recognized and implemented by the Member and Associate Member States of the ACS.

VI. **Take into consideration the management of risks in all development programs of the countries of the Greater Caribbean and favour the exchange of documentation of best practices in the field. In addition, enhance ACS Member Countries capacity to recover from disasters from natural origin, and to strengthen their civil protection and prevention systems by taking advantage of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) and by developing other similar insurance coverage facilities and mechanisms.**



PRIORITY AREA	MANDATE
EDUCATION, CULTURE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. To foster cooperation among the universities and other tertiary institutions of the Greater Caribbean II. Cultural co-operation To foster technical meetings between the cultural cooperation units of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and those of the Ministries of Culture. III. Creation of a calendar of events The ACS seeks to coordinate efforts to produce a Calendar of ACS Cultural Events annually.



PRIORITY AREA	MANDATE
CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. The examination of the legal, economic and financial implications, as well as benefits, of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area.



PRIORITY AREA	MANDATE
SPECIAL FUND	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Consolidate and strengthen the Unit II. To create a Forum for the Exchange of Ideas and Planning III. To obtain technical assistance IV. To prepare a matrix that would systematize all potential sources of co-operation

FOCAL AREAS

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The Sustainable Tourism Work Programme (STWP) is supported by four major programmatic areas under which projects are identified and executed. The STWP has been conceptualised to create a portfolio of projects that would form the basis for the establishment of the Caribbean as a Sustainable Tourism Zone. These projects are focused on the overall objective of the ACS Sustainable Tourism Directorate to develop initiatives that would facilitate consultation, cooperation and concerted action among ACS Member States and Associate Members to address the major challenges affecting tourism in the Region.



FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES:

- **The Regional Co-operation Mechanism of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC):** This project seeks to enhance the visibility and value of the STZC to ACS Member countries, and includes a Study on Sustainable Tourism best practices in the Region, development of the STZC website and publication of brochures, guidebooks and other literature on the STZC.
- **Training for Careers in Sustainable Tourism Project:** Entails a study/research publication to document the needs and priorities for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the tourism sector in the Greater Caribbean, with the aim of developing a framework for a comprehensive TVET programme.

- **Promotion of Multidestination Tourism:** Facilitate and enhance collaboration and dialogue between the regional tourism and transport sectors to promote the concept of multi-destination packaging.
- **Promotion of Languages and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean:** Creation of a database of language training institutions dedicated to language learning as well as the implementation of student exchange programs among the ACS countries for language training and cultural immersion.
- **Promotion of Safety and Security in the Tourism Industry:** Promote and enhance co-operation among countries on tourist safety and security and mechanisms that guarantee a multi-dimensional approach to safety and security in the tourism sector in the Greater Caribbean.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

The Directorate of Trade is fully committed to the expansion of intra-ACS trade and the consolidation of an enhanced economic space for trade and investment within the Greater Caribbean. The vision of the Directorate is that through cooperation and concerted action, the efforts of ACS Member and Associate Member States will contribute to more competitive participation in international markets, as well as increase the bene-

fits offered by the synergies of the countries of the Greater Caribbean regarding the issues of integration and trade liberalisation. Therefore, the Directorate of Trade continues to work in the interest of Member States and Associate Members for the realization of projects and activities which will further strengthen the economic and development position of these countries, and redound great benefits to the Greater Caribbean Region.

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES:

→ 1. The Reduction and/or Elimination of Challenges and Obstacles to Trade Facilitation and Factor Mobility. Principal Projects (funded by the Government of Mexico):

-International Transit of Goods in the Greater Caribbean (TIM).

-Interconnectivity for Improved Trade Facilitation and Short Distance Maritime Shipping in the Greater Caribbean (SMDT).

→ 2. Promote the Growth and Sustainable Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

→ 3. Expand our trade and investment climate through the holding of the annual Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean and the Forum of Trade Promotion Organizations.

→ 4. Offer Training and Capacity Building on Trade Issues.



TRANSPORT

Air and maritime transport are key for the Greater Caribbean, for strengthening regional ties, especially in the areas of trade and tourism, hence the strategic programme "Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea". Promoting the connectivity between the Member Countries of the Greater Caribbean is a fundamental objective of the ACS.



FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES:

→ Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean:

Displays 167 maritime services distributed in 55 shipping lines and attended by 614 vessels in 37 countries and 71 ports of the Greater Caribbean. This project can be accessed via the following link:
<http://www.cocatram.org.ni/rutas/>

→ Air Transport Agreement among Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States:

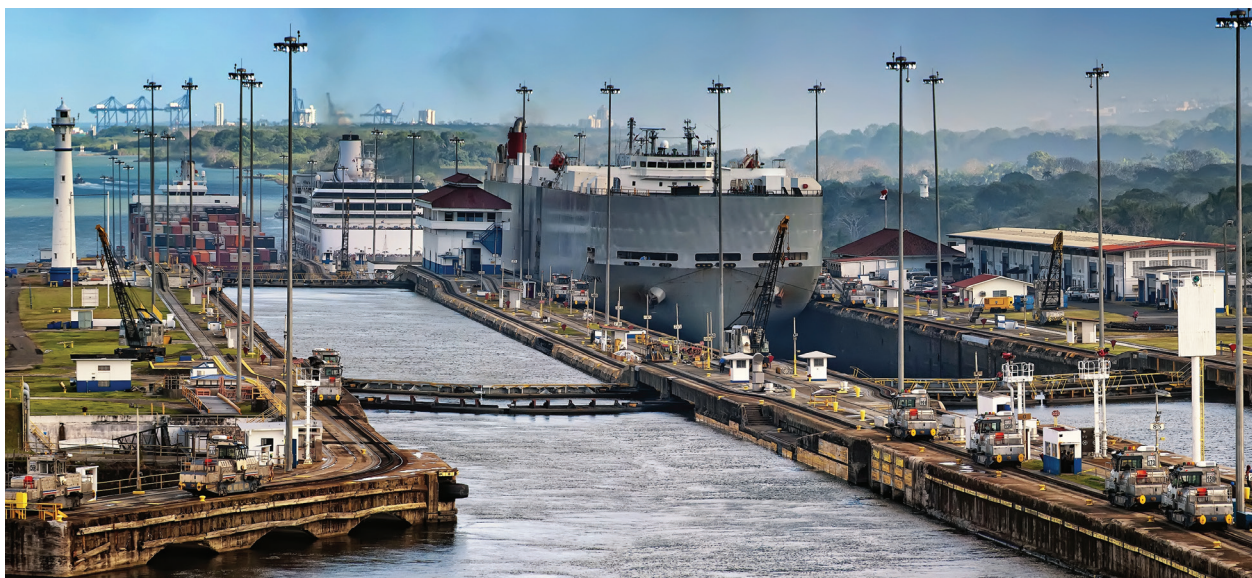
To implement a common air transport policy, it has been ratified by 13 countries and entered into force on September 19 2008.

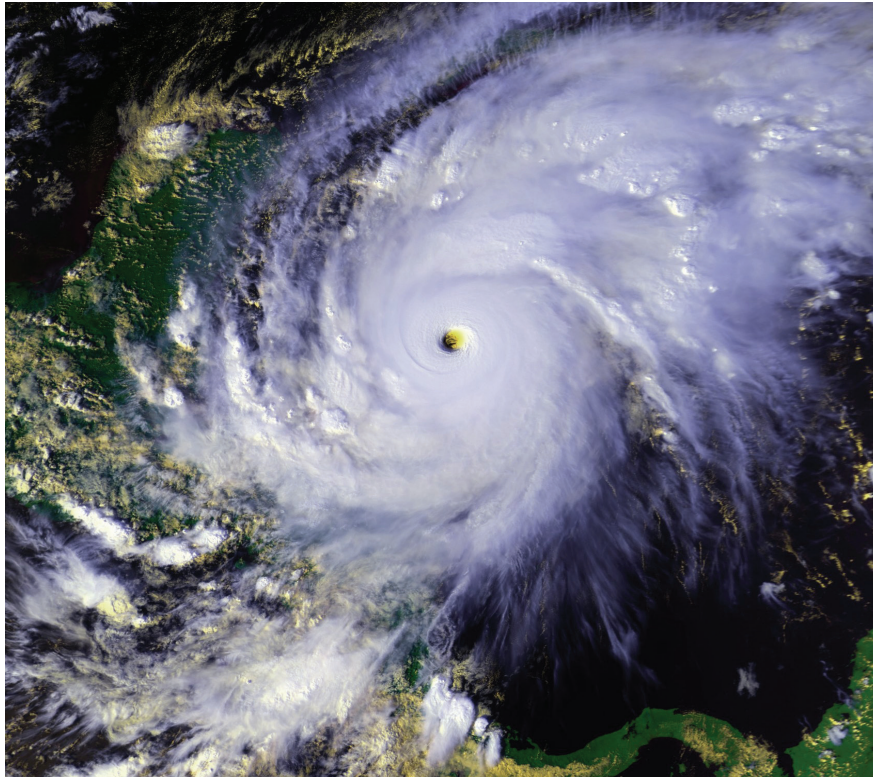
→ Port and Maritime Strategy of the Greater Caribbean:

An analysis of the port and maritime strategies of the Greater Caribbean, seeking to help countries make better decisions with respect to their port operations and infrastructure anticipating the opening of the 3rd set of locks of the Panama Canal in 2015.

→ Commercial Cooperation Partnerships and Alliances among the Airlines of ACS Countries:

Intended to identify the type of alliances that currently exist among airlines in the Region and to establish a uniform regulatory framework that would facilitate commercial cooperation agreements and alliances among the airlines allowing for an increase in the networks of routes and connections.





FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES:

→ **SHOCS Strengthening Hydro-meteorological Operations and Services in the Caribbean SIDS:** Offered to Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & The Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago.

→ **The Rough Season:** Radio soap opera which sensitizes the Caribbean population and increases their knowledge, as well as improves their reaction to meteorological phenomena.

→ **Green Response to Disasters:** Currently in feasibility stage with an analysis being done on Trinidad & Tobago, this study aims to provide Caribbean governments and people with eco-efficient tools and environmentally friendly processes to be utilized for responding to disasters impacting on their country.

→ **Online Diploma on the Management of Disaster Risk Reduction:** In an effort to build capacity in regional organisations the implementation of this virtual training course seeks to improve competencies of officials, decision-makers and stakeholders who belong to risk management institutions in ACS countries.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The Special Committee provides a framework for exchange and partnership between international cooperation agencies; ministries in charge of planning and finance and organizations specialized in Disaster Risk Reduction.





THE CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION

The Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was established on March 28, 2006, under the auspices of the Association of Caribbean States and by virtue of Ministerial Council Agreement 6/06, entitled, "Creation of the Follow-up Commission for the Caribbean Sea Initiative". The aim of the CSC is to function as the structured mechanism through which work to gain recognition for the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development could be pursued. This endeavour has become known as the Caribbean Sea Initiative (CSI).

The work of the CSC and the Caribbean Sea Initiative has gained recognition before the United Nations as evidenced by several resolutions that have been adopted by the General Assembly. The latest resolution was negotiated and adopted, without a vote, in 2012 at the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and is entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations". This new resolution endorses the work of the ACS in this vein and requests that the Secretary General report to the 69th UNGA on the ongoing initiatives of the CSC.



The CSC has engaged a consultant to examine the implications of the designation of a special area for the Caribbean Sea and anticipate that the outcome of this study will form the basis for a symposium that will engage the participation of stakeholders in the development of future initiatives.

SPECIAL FUND

The Special Fund has its inception rooted in the year 1995, around the same time that the Association of Caribbean States was established. Throughout the years, the Governments of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and the Regional Council of Martinique, have continuously supported the work of the Special Fund, ensuring that it strengthens cooperation within the Region. This Unit actively channels its resources mainly towards regional functional projects in the focal areas of the Association.



THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SPECIAL FUND ARE:

- Development of relationships with potential donors.
- The preparation of project proposals, negotiation of project financing and monitoring the implementation of projects.

Based on these objectives, the Special Fund has been working on the development of various initiatives that are presented in the next pages with the purpose of obtaining financial support and countries' technical assistance, organizations, agencies and international donors.





SPECIAL FUND INITIATIVES



Institutional strengthening of the ACS

The overall project objective is to strengthen the operational and administrative capacity of the Association's Secretariat to enable the fulfillment of its mandate and functions as it seeks to achieve the development goals of Member States and Associate Members States.

Main focus however, is to strengthen the capacity building of the Association to encourage cooperation in several main thematic areas –Trade, Tourism, Transport, Disaster Risk Reduction, Economic Development, Climate Change, Renewable Energy, Education and Culture.

Properly implemented, this project would result in a greatly strengthened, integrated ACS Secretariat, one structured to provide services and guidance to Member States through sound and efficient management principles and clearly identified priorities of Member and Associate Members States.

New communication and technology information systems (hardware and software), would also lead to improved liaison, communications and networking with Member States, development partners,

private sector partners, civil society and other international organizations. Arguably, these improvements would require increased funding for their sustainability and continuity, which would be generated from increased financial contributions to the ACS Secretariat from Member States.

Since we now live in the digital age, the ACS cannot allow itself to be left behind. So there is a need to digitalize all information and archives of the Association and the best storage system has to be sourced to ensure preservation for posterity.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

The goal of the project is to strengthen the capacity building of the Association of Caribbean States in implementing cooperation in main thematic areas such as Trade, Tourism, Transport, Disaster Risk Reduction, Economic Development, Climate Change, Renewable Energy, Education and Culture.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- A more efficient and effective Secretariat ready to provide leadership and coordination of initiatives and projects of strategic interest for the Association.
- Strengthening technical capacity in strategic areas of the association –Trade, Tourism, Transportation, Disaster Risk Reduction, Economic Development, Renewable Energy, Education and Culture.
- Adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) as a key factor for the modernization of the Organization.



Increased competitiveness in tourism development in the Greater Caribbean through the implementation of tourism sustainability certification

As is well known, the economies of many countries in the Association of Caribbean States, large and small, depend to a large extent on sustainable tourism and this project is aimed at making the concept of sustainability into something real, practical and necessary, in the context of a country's tourism competitiveness, based on indicators and criteria laid down in the history-making Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STCZ).

Some specific objectives of this project include improvement in competitiveness in tourism destinations in the Region, which



will translate into better income, greater innovation in the development of destinations and products, contribute significantly to the mobilisation of resources and can be used as a new marketing tool.

The essential purpose of the Certification is to improve the manner in which natural, economic and social resources are used, while providing incentives for active participation by local communities and at the same time providing new support for competitiveness in the business sector and the various service providers in the tourism sector.

The certification is also a tool which offers differentiated niche markets and represents a substantial improvement in the income and profitability generated by tourism, which today is becoming more and more sophisticated and aware of the need to preserve the natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

In summary, tourism, because of its multiplier effect, adds value to international reserves and investments through productive sectors like agriculture, construction, security and exports. Some countries have also achieved major returns through job creation, promotion, culture and the environment and above all increased economic activity, which helps in some way to reduce poverty, which is one of the Millennium Development Goals.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE: Promote competitiveness in tourism destinations in the Greater Caribbean by issuing certificates based on indicators and criteria in the STCZ, for opening up new market niches and a differentiated offer, and to make the concept of sustainability a practical, necessary and profitable reality for countries in the Region.

Destination certificates and tourism sustainability indicators will be used in accordance with the Convention establishing the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Implement an *ad hoc* certificate programme in accordance with the criteria and indicators established for the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean.
- Improve competitiveness in tourism destinations in countries of the Greater Caribbean, which translates into better incomes for receiving communities.
- Innovate in the development of destinations and products.
- Serve as a marketing tool.
- Contribute to the mobilization of resources.
- Increase the flow of tourists to certified destinations, which translates into increased incomes.
- Training in the implementation of sustainable tourism indicators in the STCZ.

Strengthening women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector

The ACS Directorate of Sustainable Tourism (DST), has recognised that in the Greater Caribbean today, the decline of agriculture and manufacturing has propelled tourism to be the most important industry in the Region. More importantly, however, is the fact that tourism also offers great entrepreneurship opportunities for women.

The burgeoning sector in many destinations has driven the growth and development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), many of which are skills-based service enterprises that are owned and operated by women, mainly in the realm of entertainment services related to specific cultural art forms and expressions, production of arts and craft, local cuisine/culinary art and some traditional skills like basket weaving and hair braiding.

Now aware of the formidable women component in the sector, the DST in collaboration with the Directorate of Trade, Development and External Economic Relations (DTDEER) has embarked on this new initiative to enhance the opportunities for trade and entrepreneurship generated by tourism for women entrepreneurs owning SMEs.

While the overarching goal of the project is to increase awareness of the potential and provide up-to-date information, tools and strategies to improve the competitiveness and maximise the entrepreneurship opportunities for women in the tourism sector, there are some very specific goals like being an engine for increased trade, the socio-economic development of women and the transfer of knowledge and resources to build the entrepreneurial skills of women-owned SMEs.

With the successful execution of this initiative, the Region can expect results like

an increase in the fostering of socio-economic growth through the support of small and medium enterprise development, and the promotion of initiatives that support the development and productivity enhancement of tourism SMEs. More particularly, those owned and operated by women can serve as a strategy for employment generation and poverty eradication.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE: The overarching goal or objective is to increase awareness of the potentialities and provide information, tools and strategies to improve the competitiveness and maximize the entrepreneurship opportunities for women, generated by tourism.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Highlight the importance of tourism as an engine for increased trade and the socio-economic development of women.
- Produce literature and tools to build the entrepreneurial skills of SMEs in general and women owned SMEs in particular.
- Transfer knowledge and resources to increase the competitiveness and contribute to the promotion, adoption and implementation of strategies for capacity-building geared towards entrepreneurial strengthening of women with SMEs in the tourism industry.
- Showcase women-owned SMEs to generate interest, exposure and opportunities for increased business.
- Facilitate cooperation and dialogue for the strengthening of the regional tourism industry and the adoption of pro-poor and sustainable tourism practices.

Caribbean Carnival network

Carnival in the Caribbean is a festival that is enjoyed by all and sundry. But while it may be more prevalent in the small island Caribbean States, there are enjoyable carnivals in many of the Central American countries which form a significant part of the Association of Caribbean States.

Since the historic and cultural patrimony shared by the States and territories of the ACS provide a solid basis on which to develop cooperative efforts, it would take concerted action in the areas of education, culture, science and technology. Such sharing of knowledge and know how can only have a multiplying and positive effect in the Region and help in improving the important aspects of the festivals like marketing, and advertising of this tourism product, plus the generation of income for micro, small and medium enterprises which work around this celebration all year round.

Carnival is not simply a source of income. It is also a means of encouraging solidarity among the peoples of the Caribbean. It is well documented that the Peoples of the Region come from similar backgrounds, which brought many peoples of different races from all over



the world to these shores and such diversity is the source of the rich cultural heritage now the hallmark of the Region. Increased collaboration in this cultural vineyard would serve to bring the people even closer as one Caribbean people.

Additionally, subtexts in this exercise could mean the arranging of seminars, conferences and books fairs all aimed at the exchange of knowledge, techniques and practices, thus enlarging the opportunities for job creation and development of particular artisan skills associated with Carnival.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

To promote cooperation in the Region in the area of culture and, more particularly, Carnival.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- The organization of seminars, conferences, book fairs and exchanges with the aim of promoting cooperation and friendship between Member States in the area of culture. This will also serve to enhance

the Carnival product of countries involved.

- Develop a massive promotional campaign around the world to attract more international tourists.
- Develop programmes to support micro, small and medium enterprises and clusters of the productive industry.
- Exchange and transfer of know-how and best practices and technology around the Carnival celebration.
- Promote intra-regional cooperation.



Network of virtual archives of the African Caribbean Diaspora

People of African descent in the Greater Caribbean number about 150 million, close to one third of the entire population of the Region. They form ethnic minorities in some countries of the Greater Caribbean, and account for the largest origin group in others.

Over the years, the presence of African descendants has added original contributions to the Greater Caribbean and African

culture has become immersed in the Region as its influence is reflected in various aspects of life, in the areas of music, dance, the arts, literature, speech forms and religious practices.

Although there is a significant African influence in the Greater Caribbean, inequalities and disadvantages faced by people of African descent still exists, and has its origins in historical processes and discriminatory stereotypes.

In recognising that there needs to be greater awareness and infusion of the cultural and historical patrimony of this segment in society, the ACS seeks to introduce a network of virtual archives of the African Diaspora, by way of promoting and preserving the cultural identity and history of people of African descent in the Greater Caribbean Region. It further aims to take measures and strategies of regional and international cooperation to promote the integration of this ethnic group in all spheres of society.

The initiative will also increase awareness and visibility, through education of African history, recognising their social economic, political and cultural shaping to the formation of national identities in the Greater Caribbean.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE: The proposed initiative will increase the awareness and visibility of the contribution of the people of African descent of the Greater Caribbean, through the creation of a network of virtual archives specializing in the history and culture of people of African descent in the Region.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Preservation of archives information of history and culture.
- Construction of a virtual network to facilitate sharing and exchange of information with historians, researchers, academic and civil society.
- Promote awareness of culture and history to contribute to the formation of identities in the Caribbean.
- Promote education programmes to disseminate information.

Trade capacity building

In any international grouping, trade is always a major player in the success of any such association. It's no different with the Association of Caribbean States, which from its inception has regarded trade and trade negotiations as an important plank in forming sustainable relationships.

The strengthening of capacity and knowledge in regional and international trade issues is of great importance within the Greater Caribbean Region. Many countries within the Region do not possess the needed trained human capital, institutional knowledge and necessary capabilities to adequately and effectively participate within the international trading system.

The immediate need, therefore, is the development of strategies to create an E-learning platform. The offer of online courses and webinars has been considered by the Directorate of Trade Development and External Economic Relations, as one of the most suitable modalities of transfer of knowledge and capacity building for the Member and Associate Member States of the ACS.

As an adjunct to this, there needs to be increased knowledge and understanding of existing trade agreements, benefits and strategies to take advantage of these instruments, which can stem directly from improved analytical and negotiating skills, and can be very useful in addressing priority trade policy issues at all levels – national, regional, sub-regional and international.

The success factor in trade negotiations will also be impacted by the effective use of relevant information and documentation

on trade-related issues via the internet, the World Trade Organization and the International Trade Center.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

Promote capacity building in trade negotiations, and other relevant trade-related issues, of the Member

and Associate Member States of the Association of Caribbean States through specialised seminars, e-courses, and webinars.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- To develop a good understanding of all aspects of the international trading system, including negotiation of free trade agreements, and integrate more fully into the multilateral system and globalization initiatives related to trade.
- To increase knowledge and understanding of existing trade agreements, its benefits and how to take advantage of these instruments.
- To improve analytical and negotiating skills.
- To learn how to effectively use relevant information and documentation on trade-related issues available in the internet.
- To strengthen capacity to work in teams and in an international environment.
- To establish and/or strengthen a network of contacts with participants and trainers/experts.
- To build and enhance institutional and human capacity in the field of trade and address constraints.
- To address priority trade policy issues at all levels (national, regional, sub-regional, international).
- To fully participate in multilateral trade negotiations.
- To analyse the impact of alternative trade policy options.





GENERAL OBJECTIVE: Implementation of the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC) model to promote competitiveness among micro, small and medium enterprises in ACS Member Countries.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- To establish at least six business development centres in ACS Member Countries to provide business support services for MSMEs.
- To improve the competitiveness of MSMEs in the Region.
- To improve existing MSMEs through sustained growth and the penetration of new international markets (internationalisation).
- To contribute to the growth and enhancement of MSMEs in the Region through product and service innovation.
- Technical assistance and ongoing training for MSMEs.
- Access to new market information.

Support to micro, small and medium enterprises

Implementation of the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC) model in the Caribbean Region

In the Greater Caribbean Region, small businesses provide the majority of jobs, rising in many instances close to 85 per cent of the job market. It is crucial then, that for a proper model to be built, a clear definition must be made to enunciate exactly what is a micro, small or medium enterprise (MSMEs).

Serious measures to increase productivity; facilitate access to funding; reduce logistical costs; increase access to new technology and integrate MSMEs into value chains, can all lead to job creation.

A World Bank study has identified some obstacles in a few critical areas which now retard the growth and development

of MSMEs –transportation and logistics, electricity, innovation and quality, access to new technology, human capital, funding, trade rules and access to new market information.

The success of this project, however, depends on the early establishment of the six business development centres in the Caribbean Region; the development of MOUs with private/public entities to foster the SBDCs; training and certification of technical staff to provide services (train the trainers modality) and initiating the consulting process in the countries of the Region.



Strengthening Trade and Investment Promotion Agencies (TIPAs) of the Greater Caribbean Region

For a majority of the membership of the ACS, trade and investment promotion agencies are relied upon to play a leading role in developing strategies aimed at attracting increasing trade and investment partners.

In this regard, this project is aimed at strengthening Caribbean Trade and Investment Promotion Agencies and also to facilitate co-operation and joint action between

these agencies so that greater advantage could be taken of the synergies generated by the work undertaken by these organisations as they moved towards creation of a co-ordinated investment promotion strategy and communication network, in the hope of being ranked among the best performers globally, based on concrete results of trade promotion and foreign direct investment (FDI) attraction into the Region.

However, to achieve this goal would require development of the human capacity to be better able to compete effectively and strengthen the Region's competitiveness in the global marketplace, which would result in increased levels of trade and FDI job creation.

Improved intra-regional and international trade flows could result in the expansion of trade and investment opportunities, which in turn could allow for increased access to data and information, while exchanging best practices and knowledge. Such actions could also lead to the development of unique export strategies and to be able to optimise the use of free trade agreements.

Some of the gains to be garnered from this project would mean competent officers in trade and investment promotion with the correct set of skills and knowledge to better promote the advantages of their various countries and providing sectorial profiles for goods and services with export potential.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE: This initiative is geared towards the strengthening of the Caribbean Trade and Investment Promotion Agencies and to facilitate cooperation and joint action between TIPAs of the Greater Caribbean

Region in order to take advantage of the synergies in the work undertaken by these organizations towards the creation of a coordinated investment promotion strategy and communication network, thus being ranked among best performers globally based on concrete results of trade promotion and FDI attraction into the Region.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Develop human capacity to compete effectively.
- Strengthen the Region's competitiveness in the global market place.
- Generate increased levels of trade and of foreign direct investment job creation.
- Improved intraregional and international trade flows.
- Increased access to data and information.
- Exchange of best practices and knowledge.
- Expansion of trade and investment opportunities.
- Develop and strengthen export strategies.
- Optimize the use of free trade agreements.

Opportunities for the Caribbean to capitalise on regional branding through Geographical Indications (GIs)

Investment and focus on intellectual property rights (IPR), especially Geographical Indications in the Greater Caribbean is of great importance to the economic development and innovation of the Region. The Region is host to a diversity of cultures and is rich with traditional knowledge which can be marketed to the wider world given the appropriate protection and know how provided for in the TRIPS Agreement. It offers new branding strategies for the differentiation of products originating from the ACS Region.

The Region has already enjoyed some substantial success through GIs in its rum industry. As a substantial employer and a significant source of government revenue, rum is a product of critical importance to the social and economic well-being of the Region, which has enjoyed extended protection under Article 23 for its rum-producing countries such as Barbados (Mount Gay Rum), Jamaica (Appleton Estate Rum) and Guatemala (Ron Zacapa Centenario).

These benefits therefore, are important aspects to be considered if the Greater Caribbean is to fully pursue the creation of GIs for select products of particular export interest and regional branding.

Additional benefits such as to promote cultural development through trade and economic integration; support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the quest to penetrate new markets and trading partners and also incorporate these SMEs into the value chain, with the ultimate goal being to boost the economy of the Greater Caribbean while increas-

ing the national production as a result of increased demand from the ACS Member countries.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE: To further goals for export diversification and intra-regional and extra-regional trade for the ACS Members by capitalising on regional branding through the utilisation of geographical indications. The project utilises a two-prong approach which takes into account firstly, the individual Member States and their unique products to capitalise on geographical indications; and secondly, on a regional scale where commonalities exist.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- To develop products with export potential for individual Member and Associate Member States.
- To identify commonalities amongst the Region's products to be considered for regional branding.
- To better exploit opportunities of export interest through the untapped potential of geographical indications.
- To ignite growth in infant industries with export potential.
- To strengthen cooperation between the private and public sectors.
- To reduce production costs through local sourcing.
- To facilitate greater cooperation and collaboration among Member and Associate Member States to identify these opportunities where commonalities are found.
- To promote, on a reciprocal basis, the development and sale of local products in all the markets of ACS Member Countries.
- To promote cultural development through trade and economic integration.
- Support small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in the quest for penetrating new markets and trading partners.
- Incorporate SMEs to value chains.
- Boost the economy of the Greater Caribbean.
- To increase national production as a result of increased demand from the ACS Member Countries.

Climate change and transfer of best practices: vulnerability in the Caribbean

For more than two decades, organisations all over the world have been issuing warnings about the disastrous effects climate change would have on the entire world. In a lot of instances, these warnings have been ignored. Now that the effects of climate change have begun to negatively impact so many countries, there is a clamour for assistance.

The main aim is to find, identify and adapt successful experiences implemented in other parts of the world, with similar conditions to the Greater Caribbean and so formulate a catalogue of practical steps that can be actioned as part of a national and regional strategy.

Climate change will impact a wide range of sectors of Caribbean economies and societies. There is the need therefore, to adapt measures that would assist communities in addressing those impacts and such measures should target priority development sectors and be guided by policies and strategies that integrate with broader national planning processes.

The Fifth Intergovernmental Panel of Experts on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment

was completed earlier this year and its Report presented. Participants included scientists, environmentalists, researchers and inter-disciplinary experts from all over the world. The report assessed “needs, options, opportunities, constraints, resilience, limits among other aspects associated with adaptation”. Risk has become a new focus of the report and it articulates several that are easily pertinent to the Greater Caribbean Region.

Some of these risks include: death, injury, ill health or disrupted livelihoods in low lying coastal zones, small island developing States and other small islands; systemic risk due to extreme weather events leading to the breakdown of infrastructure networks and critical services like electricity, water supply and health and emergency services.

The need to adapt best practice is inevitable and should be embraced because if they have yielded positive results in regions similar to ours, then it has to be one of the most important subjects on the agendas of all Member and Associate Member Countries of the ACS.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE: Identify best practices in capacity building and institutional strengthening for climate change adaptation and mitigation to strengthen capacity at national, sub-regional and regional levels. This

is to ensure that the people of the Greater Caribbean Region can respond and build their capacity to reduce vulnerability and develop resilience to the risks and impacts of climate change through the articulation and improvement of action plans, frameworks, policies and measures into a single comprehensive platform highlighting commonalities and differences.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Reduce vulnerability in the Region.
- Build resilience in the Region.

- Identify best practices to adapt to the Region.
- Build capacities and institutional strengthening of regional organisations to respond to climate change.
- Joint action plans and frameworks at all levels.
- More effective national, sub-regional and regional response to climate change.
- Integration of climate change within national, sub-regional and regional Sustainable Development Strategies.
- Stronger Caribbean–Central and Latin America relationship.
- Strengthened technical capacity in climate change.
- Adoption of ICTs will be a key enabler of the organizations capacities to combat climate change.
- Improve understanding of climate change.
- Education, training and awareness.



Sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea

The Caribbean Sea, that large body of water which washes the shores of many ACS Member and Associate Member States, is a fragile and complex marine environment. These countries, of varying sizes and populations and in different stages of economic development, are heavily dependent on this area for their social, economic, cultural, climatic, aesthetic and other benefits.

However, reliance on the Caribbean Sea to derive these benefits has served as the catalyst for the development of a number of debilitating phenomena on the sustainability of the marine environment and to that extent, recognition has been given to the need to develop strategies towards preservation of the Caribbean Sea to ensure its viability into the future.

The Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) has been established as a mechanism for the sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea in the Greater Caribbean Region. While this is the general objective of the CSC, there are two other specific goals:

- To create awareness for the importance of the Caribbean Sea on a national, regional and international scale.
- To establish the CSC as a source of information and mechanism for dissemination of critical information pertaining to the Caribbean Sea.



GENERAL OBJECTIVE: Establish the CSC as a mechanism for the sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea in the Greater Caribbean Region.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Create awareness for the importance of the Caribbean Sea on a national, regional and international scale.
- Establish the CSC as a source of information and mechanism for dissemination of critical information pertaining to the Caribbean Sea.

To ensure the realisation of these two goals, a massive awareness campaign has to be developed as well as a capacity building programme in sustainability of the fisheries industry, including micro and small and medium enterprises.

In the case of any awareness campaign however, there is need to establish a regional database and network for sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea, as well as a database of experts (researchers, consultants, studies, etc.) in the various fields pertaining to climate change and preservation of the Caribbean Sea. Such an awareness campaign should also be aimed at children as young as eight years, so they understand the need to reserve this vast marine area.



Shutterstock: Cover and first pages: Vilainecrevette (coral reef), f9photos (Chichén-Itzá), Daniel Álvarez (painted child), Chris Collins (mountain), manusy (flower); 10: Richard Semik (bay), Tamara Kushch (children); 11: Nvelichko (djembe), Mstyslav Chernov (carnival); 16-17: ixpert (planet), Tom Wang (crack), Taweesak Jarearnsin (macaw); 22: Vilainecrevette (coral reef); 23: cyo bo (flamingo); 24: Miguel García Saavedra (coffee beans), Niv Koren (port); 25: Chris Parypa Photography (airplane); 27: Ozphotoguy (children), Ethan Daniels (whale); 28: Idreamphoto (crystal sea); 29: Kamira (hats); 30: Eric Baker (Panama Canal); 33: T Photography (woman labeling bananas), Robert Young (port); 34: aquapix (shoal), Alfredo Maiquez (city), Salim October (girl in carnival), rj lerich (beach), Martchan (woman with leaves of snuff), AlexKol Photography (ship); 36: Henner Damke (turtle); 37: Andresr (woman); 38: John de la Bastide (carnival); 40: Kamira (hats); 41: T photography (women working); 42: Lilac Mountain (container ship); 45: aquapix (shoal).

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www.acs-aec.org

5-7 Sweet Briar Road, St. Clair, P.O. Box 660,
Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago, West Indies
Tel: (868) 622 9575 | Fax: (868) 622 1653