

7th ACS Summit of Heads of State and/or Government

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**PRELIMINARY DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION REVISION 4**

**HONDURAS’ COMMENTS**

IV MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMISSION TO PREPARE THE PRELIMINARY

DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PERIOD 2016-2018

ACS SECRETARIAT: APRIL 26TH, 2016

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**IV MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMISSION TO PREPARE THE PRELIMINARY**

**DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PERIOD 2016-2018**

**PRELIMINARY DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION- REVISION 4**

1. **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

**1.1 Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC)** This area of work includes the establishment and recognition of the Greater Caribbean as a region that supports and promotes sustainable tourism development, as well as the provision of the political and operational framework for the STZC. The scope of work focuses on coordinating regional efforts to support the establishment of the Region as a Sustainable Tourism Zone through the implementation of the technical aspects contained in the “Rules Governing the Identification, Approval and Categorisation of the Destinations that Constitute the STZC”.

**HONDURAS: This first action carries the same title as in the 2013-2014 Plan of Action, thus it could be concluded that no advancements were made in this activity in previous years. It is suggested that it be named according to the objective being pursued for this biennium, for example *Implementation of the technical aspects identified in the Rules Governing the Identification, Approval and Categorisation of the Destinations that Constitute the STZC*, or the most suitable name.**

The four main actions to be undertaken in this area are:

* + 1. Continue with the process of ratifying the STZC Convention and the Protocol by all of the Member States and Associate Member States of the ACS who are yet to do so;
    2. Follow-up with the Regional Cooperation Mechanism (RCM) that allows the application of the Sustainable Tourism Indicators in the destinations selected by the ACS Members and Associate Members;

**HONDURAS: With respect to 1.1.2, it is a well known fact that there is a series of established parameters, however, it is important to identify which will be applied or the cycle of application: they will all be applied simultaneously or more than two years will be necessary in order for them to be effectively measured.**

* + 1. Develop a process for the Certification of Destinations within the framework of the Sustainable Tourism Indicators;

**HONDURAS: With respect to 1.1.3, will this process to certify destinations be achieved based on the indicators or the criteria? It is suggested that the wording be changed to: “Develop the appropriate and sustainable process for the certification of destinations, within the operating framework of the prioritised sustainable tourism indicators”.**

* + 1. To encourage the development of MULTIDESTINATION within the scope of the STZC once it complies with the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Indicators in the destinations that the Member States and Associate Member States have already proposed, as this will create an offer for sustainable tourism destinations that can be promoted for visits under this modality.

**1.2 Training and Capacity-Building** This aims topromote training and education in sustainable tourism for capacity building in human resources throughout different areas of the sector in order to increase the competitiveness of destinations in the region.

**HONDURAS. With respect to the title of 1.2 and given the content of the paragraph, the better title would be *Education and Capacity Building*. Education involves learning while training involves maintaining or enhancing productivity**

**.**

The three main actions to be undertaken in this area are:

1.2.1 Promote the implementation of a Regional Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Region;

1.2.2 Develop an exchange program targeted to students and professionals in the region for language learning in coordination with Guadeloupe International Centre for a Regional Approach to Languages (CIGAREL), an initiative of the Regional Council of Guadeloupe and INTERREG Secretariat;

1.2.3 Develop capacity building in relation to tourism security, continuing with the exchange of experiences and best practices through the Regional Working Group, which will create a Draft Programme for Regional Tourism Safety and eventually offer recognition at the level of tourist safety to the destination.

**1.3 Community Tourism** Support of community tourism initiatives in accordance with decisions stemming from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Meeting of Regional Tourism Organizations, as well as support of the development of tourism-related Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises through regional partnerships and collaboration to contribute to their sustainability and growth.

*MEXICO: Recommends that CELAC does not need to be mentioned in this paragraph in order to give relevance to this ACS activity as the organizer.*

*VENEZUELA: Said that it is necessary to mention CELAC in this paragraph due to the importance of this institution to Latin America and the Caribbean not to mention serious downplaying it otherwise.*

*CUBA: It suggests that if it is mentioned that a link has been made*

The two main actions to be carried out in this area are:

1.3.1 Create a database of Community Tourism Projects which exist in the region and share best practices and experiences learned and support the annual Meeting of Regional Tourism Organizations of CELAC;

* + 1. Create a database of the handicraft sector in the Region and support the coordination of activities that will achieve its consolidation.

*VENEZUELA: 1.4.Multi-destination Tourism*

*Certification of tourist destinations must be evaluated by the appropriate national authorities and decisions taken within the ACS framework must promote Member States’ initiatives, programmes and projects related to the development of sustainable tourism through a cooperation scheme within the Greater Caribbean.*

1. **TRADE AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS DEVELOPMENT** 
   1. **Gradual Reduction and Elimination of Barriers to Trade and Investment in the Greater Caribbean**

This area will focus on holding Technical Meetings of the Working Groups on Customs and Port Facilitation, including those relating to the hydrographic capacities of member countries.

The expected results would be the implementation of the *International Transit of Goods (TIM) and the Short-Distance Maritime Transport (SDMT) Project*, which encompass the advancement of Port Development activities, and the strengthening of the hydrographic capacities of relevant agencies of the ACS membership (FOCAHIMECA), through projects funded by the Mexican Government, with funds from the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID).

*COLOMBIA: as well as the configuration of a working group on the tariff preferences of the Caribbean.*

* + 1. **International Transit of Goods (TIM) Project**

The objective of the TIM project is to reduce shipping time of goods in transit by means of a standardized process which allows the information required by customs, immigration and phyto-sanitary officials to be consolidated into a single document (Single Transit Document – DUT).

**2.1.2 Short-Distance Maritime Transport Project (SDMT)**

The goal of the SDMT project is to analyse obstacles and identify concrete actions to help improve the operating efficiency of ports in the Region, with emphasis and support for small ports, as well as the promotion of intra-regional trade through short distance maritime transport. It also includes the creation of a database on import needs and demands and export offers designed to encourage and facilitate the growth of intraregional trade.

**2.1.2.1 Strengthening Hydrographic Capacities in the Mesoamerica and the Caribbean**

Finally, the FOCAHIMECA Project aims to create or boost the hydrographic capacity of the states and territories of Mesoamerica and the Caribbean by a) increased bathymetric database on the maritime areas; b) a safety guarantee for the navigation of merchant and tourist ships between ports; and c) the creation and/or increase in the efficiency of shipping routes and port infrastructure to boost maritime and economic development based on the information collected.

*COLOMBIA****: 2.1.3 Formation of a working group on the tariff preferences of the Caribbean:*** *To form the working group on the tariff preferences of the Caribbean in order to collect, analyse and make proposals on the preferences which may be granted among the countries of the Caribbean.*

*The purpose of the Group's work would be to facilitate Member States’ economic integration and to enable the expansion and diversification of commercial exchange between them by means of a suitable mechanism of granting of tariff preferences, taking into account the asymmetries of markets.*

* 1. **The Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Greater Caribbean**

The activities focused on the promotion of MSMEs will be executed through the Joint Cooperation Programme for the Development and Strengthening of MSMEs in the Greater Caribbean Region with financial and technical support from the Colombian Government, through the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism, the Presidential Agency of International Cooperation (APC–Colombia) and other institutions with experience in the field.

* + 1. **The Joint Cooperation Programme for the Development and Strengthening of MSMES in the Greater Caribbean Region**

The actions will focus on:

2.2.1.1 Strengthening institutional capacity for policy and programme development;

2.2.1.2 Designing financial and non-financial instruments for entrepreneurs and MSMEs, and

2.2.1.3 Promoting the MSMEs of the ACS Member States.

* 1. **Promote the Convergence and Deepening of Trade within the ACS through** **New Schemes.**

Undertake the production of economic bulletins and the identification of possible avenues for trade and investment flows.

Similarly, the implementation of Course, Seminars and Training Workshops intended to broaden and strengthen knowledge of trade related issues in the Greater Caribbean Region with the technical assistance of specialized international and regional organizations and institutions in sharing implemented best practices.

1. **TRANSPORT**

The programme **“Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea”** will be implemented through actions in air and maritime transport, which might contribute, in an effective manner, to the expansion of intra-Caribbean trade and investment, multi-destination tourism, as well as functional cooperation in general among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS.

**HONDURAS: It is suggested that consideration be given to which and how many ports will be included in the programme, so that they could meet the requirements for full certification.**

**Honduras believes that it is fitting to mention that several studies have been conducted by the Central American Commission on Maritime Transport (COCATRAM) regarding maritime transport in specific Caribbean zones, so as to examine the possibility of pooling efforts and avoiding the duplication of work.**

Arising from the Plan of Action of Pétion-Ville and taking note of the findings of the recently concluded port and maritime strategy, the Directorate will in the period focus its attention on improving the capacity of ports in the region, and contribute to the reduction of risk through enhancement of navigational aid and maps in the wider Caribbean Basin. To this end, the following actions will be undertaken:

* 1. **Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean.** To implement Phases IV and V of the Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean in order to display the maritime transport services which exist, their frequency, and where the different agents of the shipping lines can be found in the framework of the existing interactive map that is systematically updated, and which is made available on the ACS website.

**HONDURAS: It is suggested that consideration be given to the COCATRAM studies on Maritime Routes and Navigation Aids. Also, take into account the possibility of countries ratifying the Agreements on Civil Compensation, since these involve trade routes.**

* 1. **The Port and Maritime Strategy of the Greater Caribbean.** To implement a strategic plan for the maritime port development of the Greater Caribbean, in order to have a competitive maritime sector, capable of satisfying the foreign trade needs of the Greater Caribbean, including the promotion and development of port infrastructure that could effectively sustain the increase in traffic expected to result from the expansion of the Panama Canal in 2016.

**HONDURAS: It is suggested that consideration be given to the strategy developed by COCATRAM for Central America aimed at the non-duplication of efforts, since said strategy covers issues such as port development and the incorporation of Short Distance Maritime Transport (SDMT).**

* + 1. **Senior Management for Ports Course.** In keeping with the findings of the Study on Port and Maritime Strategy, which established capacity building at the senior level particularly in Tier III ports, the project will include the carry out of training activities in key areas identified following consultation with regional port authorities.
    2. **Small Port Development through Cooperation.** To improve the efficiency of the smaller ports (Tier 3) in the Greater Caribbean by advancing institutional cooperating through agencies such as the Port Management Association of the Caribbean (PMAC).
  1. **Advancing the theme of Connectivity.** Work towards establishing a framework of activities with international partners to address and advance issues concerning air and maritime connectivity within the Greater Caribbean region.
     1. **Air Transport Agreement among Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States.** To continue to promote the implementation and update of the Agreement in order to meet the need of 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. Define cooperative actions with international agencies within the maritime and aviation sphere to enhance and facilitate connectivity within the region.
     2. **Convene expert meetings under the theme of connectivity.** Establish a framework of activities to treat with issues of connectivity within the Caribbean region.

1. **DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

Considering the vulnerability of our countries and territories to disasters associated with natural phenomena, ACS aims to foster international co-operation and capacity-building in the area of disaster risk reduction.

**HONDURAS: In light of its importance, it is suggested that this paragraph include the issue of climate change adaptation.**

After careful examination of the international agreements, such as the Sendai framework and the drive to incorporate geospatial data in planning to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the Directorate will be focusing on development of geospatial skills, spatial data infrastructure and modelling tools during the period. To this end, the following actions will be undertaken:

**4.1** **Continuance Project to SHOCS II.** Implement a continuance project to SHOCS II using WMO Trust Funds provided by the Government of Finland. This phase is designed to enhance the role and strengthen the capacity of National Meteorological and Hydrological Institutions and Disaster Management Agencies in ACS Member States.

**4.2** **International Diploma (virtual) in Risk Management and Disaster Reduction in Spanish and English.** This diploma is aimed at improving the competencies of officials, decision-makers, and stakeholders who belong to risk management institutions in ACS Member States.

**4.3** **UNGGIM Caribbean Project.** This project, developed by the Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico, will introduce the Caribbean States to the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information management and help to link the countries to the world geodetic frame while improving the capacity for GIS, Spatial Data Infrastructure and its use in planning in the region.

**4.4** **Caribbean Territorial Information Platform for Disaster Prevention.** This project will continue to build upon the improvements made in the UNGGIM project and develop, with the aid of regional partners, an online GIS based map for sharing and managing risk information across the Caribbean.

**HONDURAS: It is suggested that this be linked to a plan of action for risk prevention and mitigation.**

* 1. **Addressing regional vulnerabilities.** Define cooperative activities with other regional agencies to contribute to international instruments and DRR processes as well as develop actions to address the issues of vulnerability within the Greater Caribbean Region using the provisions of the Post-2015 Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as other instruments related to this subject that are recognized and implemented by the Member States of the ACS.

4.5.1. **Convene Expert Meetings around the theme of vulnerability.** Identify the activities in support of the Guiding Principles and Priorities for Action under the Sendai Framework to be executed by countries in the region, and to establish the priorities for a roadmap towards its implementation.

4.5.2. **Convene Regional Symposium of Experts on Vulnerability.** Improve the region’s resilience to natural hazards by identifying key activities to be undertaken by regional disaster management agencies and government.

**5. CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION**

The Caribbean Sea Commission is cognisant of its commitment to the preservation of the Caribbean Sea as its common patrimony and of the necessity to continue its efforts towards it being recognised as a Special Area in the context of sustainable development.

**5.1 Definition of Special Area in the context of sustainable development.**

Based on the results of the Consultation and with support from the Legal and Scientific and Technical Sub-Commissions, the Commission intends to proceed with dialogue among Member countries in order to achieve a definition of the steps necessary for the Caribbean Sea to be recognised as a Special Area in the context of sustainable development.

**5.2 Follow up of the I Caribbean Sea Commission Symposium**

Continue the implementation of the key recommendations developed at the First Symposium of the Caribbean Sea Commission and discussed at the XXI Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council, primarily;

5.2.1 Develop a coordinated response of the Greater Caribbean to the emerging threat of Sargassum seaweed, the invasion of the lion fish and coastal erosion. Materialize collaboration with the Republic of France on their proposed work plan in relation to the Sargassum seaweed.

**5.3 Annual Meeting of Experts to improve dialogue between scientists and policy makers**

Annually organize a symposium and/or workshops with the participation of experts and government officials whose responsibility is the study and management of critical issues related to the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea in the context of climate change and emerging threats to the very existence of the Caribbean people.

**5.4 Caribbean Sea Commission Databank**

The creation of a data bank that centralizes and disseminates relevant information on major threats to the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea.

**6. CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

**6.1 Promote educational cooperation between university centres and other higher education institutions in the Greater Caribbean.**

The development of the following actions will be sought:

6.1.1 Facilitate joint research between the research groups of Universities and other higher education institutions, affecting the socioeconomic and cultural development of the Greater Caribbean;

**HONDURAS: It is suggested that a fund be created to finance this research or include activities to provide financing with cooperation funds.**

6.1.2 Establish focal points in each Associate State to manage movement. It is crucial to promote meetings among these focal points in order to organise their convening;

6.1.3 It is important to encourage Greater Caribbean Studies in each Member Country, so as to promote research and joint publications among Member States on issues pertaining to the development of the Greater Caribbean.

**6.2 Cooperation in Culture**

Facilitate the development of concrete and tangible cultural cooperation programmes, to strengthen recognised spaces for cultural exchange in the Greater Caribbean, such as book fairs, art festivals, art markets and other cultural expressions, among which we highlight sport, given its capacity to promote friendship among the peoples of the Caribbean and build collective identities. In particular, it is proposed to:

6.2.1 Consolidate the Carnival Network in light of its successful establishment in Santiago de Cuba in July 2015. Caribbean carnivals constitute one of the richest cultural expressions of the peoples of the Greater Caribbean, an invaluable patrimony and one of the main instruments that we have, in the process to achieve a common identity. As a specific task for the period 2016-17, it is proposed that there be collaboration with the Network in order to:

6.2.1.1 Organise, in the framework of the carnivals, seminars, conferences, book fairs and exchanges for the purpose of promoting cooperation and friendship among the peoples.

6.2.2Create the Greater Caribbean Virtual Libraryin which the fundamental literature works of the region would be represented, in at least two of the most common languages. There will be an initial phase, with the texts translated by Casa de las Américas in Cuba and other partner institutions in the Greater Caribbean that may wish to collaborate on this initiative. Toward that end, a high quality web-page will be created for the virtual library, where the texts would be available to all students, researchers and teachers of the region at no cost.

**7.        SPECIAL FUND**

**7.1**     **To Increase activities and meetings with potential donors to** finance the projects outlined in the Work Programme for the 2016-2018 period.  Present the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) to international donors as a partner for implementing and managing projects through the Special Fund. The actions include:

* + 1. Continue one-on-one meetings with donors;
    2. Participation in meetings and events that would contribute to the objectives of the Special Fund to procure funds and greater visibility for the ACS as the administrator of funds, and technical cooperation;
    3. Forge strategic alliances with regional partners for joint work;
    4. Promote information exchange among donors;
    5. Participate in “calls for proposals” to present projects to potential donors.

**7.2     To Organise activities and meetings with International Donors**. Convene a meeting to organise the board of donors, and from there, establish strategic alliances that would allow for the formulation of a joint work plan and financing for the projects outlined in the Work Programme for the 2016-2018 period.  The activities include the following:

* + 1. Hold a forum with potential donors to present the ACS’ initiatives (every 2 years);
    2. Define activities and dates for events;
    3. Identify all donors to be invited;
    4. Organise and execute activities and meetings.

**7.3     To Channel financing from donors (cash or technical cooperation)** to the projects outlined in the Work Programme for the 2016-2018 period that would obtain financing.