

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

Havana, Cuba: 4th June, 2016

**PRELIMINARY DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION REVISION 6**

V MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMISSION TO PREPARE THE PRELIMINARY

DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PERIOD 2016-2018

ACS SECRETARIAT: MAY 9th, 2016

*Last Update: May 4th, 2016*

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

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

**PRELIMINARY DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION- REVISION 6**

**CUBA:** The tasks outlined in this Plan of Action of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) will be completed within a three-year period: 2016, 2017 and 2018. The Secretariat will present periodic reports and recommendations on their execution to the Ministerial Council and its subsidiary bodies, which must decide on the actions to be taken and the possible amendments to be made, taking into account the changes and different circumstances that may arise.

The ACS thanks Member States and Associate Members for their ongoing and valuable support for the projects and activities identified in this document.

1. **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

**1.1 Establishment and Consolidation 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 fosters sustainable tourism development. Defining the normative and regulatory framework of the STZC and coordinating regional efforts to support the establishment of the Region as a Sustainable Tourism Zone.

*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 seven main actions to be undertaken in this area are:

* + 1. Continue with the process to ratify 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;

*TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO:*

* + 1. *Commission a study to determine the level of understanding and awareness of the STZC among its members, as well as the needs of each member country as it relates to the Sustainable Tourism policy development and implementation.*
    2. *Create strategic alliances with organisations and enterprises dedicated to the promotion of sustainable tourism destinations in order to encourage the commercialization of the STZC.*
    3. *Create an STZC leaders program, involving individuals who advocate for the STZC and have implemented the indicators in their destinations and are seeing tangible benefits, to encourage other members to commit to the initiative*.
    4. 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;
    5. Develop a process for the Certification of Destinations within the framework of the Sustainable Tourism Indicators

*HONDURAS: With respect to 1.1.2 (1.1.5), 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.*

*HAITI: 1.1.6 Develop the validation of the sustainability level of the STZC destinations, with a view to establish an* ***adequate and sustainable*** *certification system within the framework of the sustainable tourism indicators, considering the processes that exist in the region and avoiding duplication of efforts.*

*Note:* Wording was modified on 1.1.3 (1.1.6) based on the request of Haiti, which was supported by the Dominican Republic at the meeting of the Sub-Commission to Prepare the Preliminary Draft Plan of Action 2016-2018.

*HONDURAS: With respect to 1.1.3 (1.1.6), 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”.*

1.1.7 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.

*CUBA: 1.1.7* *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* *on stands of the Greater Caribbean during important International Tourism Fairs.*

*COSTA RICA: Determine whether financial funds are available to develop this type of participation.*

**1.2 Education 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 four 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;

*TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: 1.2.1 Promote the implementation of a Regional Framework for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Region; including the development of a training programme that allows the procurement of a certificate and is managed with a Train the Trainer modality to reach a wider scope.*

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 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: Formulate, in conjunction with the Regional Working Group, the Regional Tourism Safety Strategy which will include a crisis management component to deal with potential threats to security at a tourism destination and that the security level at the destination will be eventually recognised.*

1.2.4 Develop capacity building in relation to tourism security, continuing with the exchange of experiences and best practices through seminars, workshops or adequate courses that can eventually result in the procurement of a degree in this matter.

**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*

**1.3 Community Tourism** Support initiatives of community tourism that are being implemented by the Members and Associate Members of the ACS, to promote social inclusion and sustainable development, as well as support of the development of tourism-related Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) through partnerships and regional collaboration that contribute to their sustainability and growth.

*COLOMBIA (received on April 20th)* ***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,~~ to promote social inclusion and sustainable development, 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.*

*COLOMBIA (received on April 29th): 1.3 Colombia supports the comments of Mexico in recommending the exclusion of the CELAC, in order to give recognition to the ACS as the organizer of this activity.*

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

* + 1. Create a database of Community Tourism Projects which exist in the region and share best practices as well as lessons learned.

MEXICO: The role of the meetings of the regional tourism organisations is being discussed in CELAC and consensus is yet to be reached regarding the approach to be used for coordination with the efforts of CELAC.

*Note: The changes in 1.3 and 1.3.1 were made in accordance to the suggestions made at the Meeting of the Sub-Commission to Prepare the Preliminary Draft Plan of Action 2016-2018.*

* + 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*

*Note: On the matter of Multi destination Tourism, originally presented through Note 401, the delegate of Venezuela will request re-wording from Capital.*

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.*

*JAMAICA: Port development and reciprocal tariff preferences among ACS Member States, require serious policy considerations.*

*JAMAICA: Precision must be exercised when defining the parameters of the ‘Business Persons’ who will benefit from the scheme.*

* + 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).

*CUBA: 2.1.1 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), which would include the electronic dispatching of export declarations in advance, thereby assisting in the trade operation.*

**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.

*CUBA: Strengthening Hydrographic Capacities in the Mesoamerica and the Caribbean*

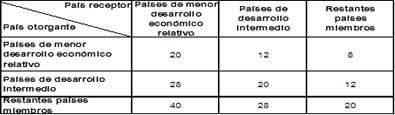
*Finally, the FOCAHIMECA Project aims to create or boost the hydrographic capacity of the states and territories of Mesoamerica and the Caribbean by a) increased bathymetric database on the maritime areas; b) a safety guarantee for the navigation of merchant and tourist ships between ports; c) the creation and/or increase in the efficiency of shipping routes and port infrastructure to boost maritime and economic development based on the information collected and d) training the specialists of our States to utilise current technologies to conduct bathymetric surveys and produce electronic nautical charts that would help to guarantee safety in maritime navigation and raise the efficiency of hydrographic services.*

*COLOMBIA (received on April 20th):* ***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.*

*COLOMBIA (received on April 29th): 2.1.3 The intention is that this first group collects economic, trade and tariff information as well as the trade agreements among the countries, and with this information they can propose a mechanism that could be similar to that Regional tariff preferences of the ALADIPAR (AR.PAR No 4), where the countries provide fixed tariff preferences to the products originating, under the category of the country in which it was classified (minor economic development, intermediate development, other countries).*

*This Table illustrates the mechanism of ALADI:*



*This mechanism of the ALADI covers most of the universal tariffs , begins with a very small percentage of preferences (then they can be deepened after) in view of the existence of sensitive sectors in each country and allows differential treatments, the establishment of a temporary exception list, facilitates the elimination of non-tariff restrictions and the countries can be slowly incorporated.*

* 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.

*COLOMBIA (received on April 20th): 2.2The 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. The proposal for the Joint Cooperation Programme for the Development and Strengthening of MSME’s is designed to explore the possibility of reaching agreement on a regional south-south cooperation programme, which could be the first step toward broader markets for Caribbean MSME’s, geared toward promoting the trade opportunities that can be offered by companies belonging to member countries, as well as facilitating the generation of regional value chains that would allow us to be much more successful in our integration with the rest of the world, based on the exchange and development of technical capabilities, experiences and knowledge among countries.*

*COLOMBIA (received on April 29th) : 2.2 The purpose of this paragraph is to expand the information about the Joint Cooperation Programme for the Development and strengthening of the SMES of the Greater Caribbean Region.*

* + 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.

*JAMAICA: With regard to 2.4 on the Promotion of the convergence and deepening of Trade within the ACS through new schemes and 2.5 on Strengthening of the Trade Capacity within the Region, note is taken of the proposal of Mexico to merge these paragraphs. However, there is a preference to keep 2.5 separate which deals with strengthening trade capacity in the Region. In addition, we are of the view that the proposal for a trade bulletin /monitor to track trade capacity intra-ACS in paragraph 2.4, should be preserved in the POA.*

*CUBA:* ***2.4*** *Business Forum for the Greater Caribbean: This forum seeks to promote trade, investment and knowledge-sharing among businessmen, businesswomen and general entrepreneurs of the Greater Caribbean. Cuba is offering to host this event in Santiago de Cuba in 2017.*

*VENEZUELA: 2.3 Promote the Convergence and Deepening of Trade within the ACS through New Schemes.*

*Undertake the production of economic bulletins, the identification of possible avenues for the growth of fair trade, productive capacity-building, intra-regional complementarity and investment flows.*

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.*

*JAMAICA: The use of the word “might” in line two (2) of Section 3 (above) is noted and would recommend the phrase “is intended”. The word “might” connotes some uncertainty.*

*Connectivity within the Caribbean has been an ongoing issue and therefore efforts and actions by ACS through the programme “Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea” will be supported by Jamaica. As a tourism-dependent nation, multi-destination tourism is also of particular interest.*

*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.*

*VENEZUELA:* ***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 (in paragraph 1.1.4. it is written that concerning multi-destination tourism, it would be advisable to maintain uniformity of format throughout the document), , as well as functional cooperation in general among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS.*

*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:*

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:

*CUBA: Arising from the Plan of Action of Pétion-Ville and taking note of the findings of the recently concluded study for the design of the 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.

*CUBA:* ***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 of the regular container lines that exist, their frequency and the location of the different agents of shipping lines by ports of call, which can be found in the interactive map posted on the web pages of the ACS, COCATRAM and the AMP, which are updated systematically.*

*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.

*CUBA****:*** *Design a Master Plan based on the preliminary port assessment conducted by the Dutch Consulting Firm MTBS and implement those of its actions that are linked to the development of the small maritime ports of the Greater Caribbean, in order to have a competitive sector, capable of satisfying the foreign trade needs of the region, which could effectively sustain the increase in traffic expected to result from the expansion of the Panama Canal and the Nicaragua Interoceanic Canal.*

*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).*

*COSTA RICA: As of this date, there is no guarantee the Canal will be constructed or when they will start to work, therefore it is considered unnecessary to include it in the document.*

*VENEZUELA:* ***3.2******The Port and Maritime Strategy of the Greater Caribbean.*** *To ~~I mplement~~ establish 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~~**~~infrastructur~~e that could effectively sustain the increase in traffic expected to result, among other things, from the expansion of the Panama Canal in 2016.*

* + 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 carrying 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).

*CUBA* ***3.2.3 : Design and presentation of the Master Plan*** *to the Special Committee on Transport and once validated by the Ministerial Council, examine with the decision makers in Member States, the possibilities for implementing future actions at both the national and regional levels.*

* 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.

*MEXICO: Maritime transport is not the subject of the ACS Air Transport Agreement.*

*CUBA: 3.3.1 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.~~*

*CUBA: 3.3.2 Define cooperative actions with international agencies within the maritime and aviation sphere to enhance and facilitate connectivity within the region.*

* + 1. **Convene expert meetings under the theme of connectivity.** Establish a framework of activities to treat with issues of connectivity within the Caribbean region.

*CUBA: 3.3.3 Convene expert meetings under the theme of connectivity. Establish a framework of activities to treat with issues of connectivity within the Caribbean region. Help validate the Master Plan formulated as part of the Maritime Port strategy.*

*MEXICO: In view of the limited resources of the ACS, it is suggested that this paragraph be more specific. For example, instead of leaving the expert meetings open, perhaps it would be better to convene a Symposium on connectivity like that done for the Caribbean Sea Commission, which would propose the initial ideas and based on that, work can continue in the framework of the Special Committee on Transport.*

*JAMAICA: A definite plan of action is needed to have the agreement ratified by majority of states that signed the air transport agreement.*

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. 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:

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

*MEXICO: Considering the vulnerability existing in 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. 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 risk assessment and identification through geospatial systems, the implementation of spatial data infrastructure and modelling tools during the period. To this end, the following actions will be undertaken:*

*CUBA: Considering the vulnerability of our countries and territories to disasters associated with natural phenomena, ACS aims to foster international co-operation and capacity-building for disaster risk management.*

*~~After careful examination of the international agreements, such as the Sendai framework~~ Taking into account Goal 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 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. The following actions will be undertaken:*

*VENEZUELA: Considering the vulnerability of our countries and territories to disasters associated with natural phenomena and the need to develop a protective system against natural disasters which ravage the Caribbean, the, ACS aims to foster international co-operation and capacity-building in the area of disaster risk reduction.*

*After careful examination of the international agreements, the objectives of the 2013 Agenda for Sustainable Tourism ~~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.

*CUBA****:*** *(New title)* ***Phase II of the Project Strengthening Hydrometeorological Operations and Services in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SHOCS) and the Early Warning System****[[1]](#footnote-1) 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 through the consolidation of their early warning systems and greater preparedness to mitigate the effects of natural hazards.*

*CUBA: Note: It is suggested that this action be listed as the fourth (4.4).*

**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.

*COLOMBIA: In this regard, Colombia indicates that it is unable to develop a second phase. However, it reiterates its willingness to provide technical support for the preparation of the content of the diploma.*

*In addition, it suggests that the name be changed simply to: “International Diploma in Disaster Risk Management”.*

*\*

*CUBA: Note: This would become 4.5.*

**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.

*CUBA: Note: This would become 4.6.*

**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.

*CUBA: This would become 4.7*

*CUBA: 4.8 Onsite course on “Local Risk Management” for ACS Member States.*

***Note: This Course will be developed in 2017 for CARICOM countries at the Centre for Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation, organised by the Environmental Agency of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of the Republic of Cuba.***

*COLOMBIA****: 4.4 Caribbean Territorial Information Platform for Disaster Prevention.*** *This project will continue to ~~build upon the~~ promote 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*

*MEXICO: This project, headed by the National Disaster Prevention Centre of Mexico, will use the UNGGIM project as its information and systems base and will develop, with the aid of regional partners, the online GIS-based multi-risk analysis 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.

*MEXICO: Define cooperative activities with other regional agencies to contribute to international instruments and DRR processes as well as develop actions to address the analysis 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.*

*CUBA: 4.5.* ***Reducing regional vulnerabilities****. Carry out cooperative activities with other regional agencies toward DRR within the Greater Caribbean Region, using the provisions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, approved in Japan on March 18, 2015, as well as other instruments related to this subject that are recognized and implemented by the Member States of the ACS.*

*CUBA: Note: We recommend that this action become 4.1 given its general nature.*

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.

*Cuba: ~~Convene Expert Meeting~~ Meeting of Experts on 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.*

*CUBA: Note: We recommend that this action be presented separately, after the next action. Therefore it would become 4.3.*

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.

*MEXCIO: 4.5.2.* ***Convene Regional Symposium of Experts on Vulnerability.*** *Reduce ~~Improve~~ the region’s vulnerability to natural hazards by identifying key activities to be undertaken by regional disaster management agencies and government. Propose regional policies for disaster risk reduction based on the identification of key activities, to be carried out by the government agencies involved in disaster management in member countries, and compatible with the international standards that use as their reference framework, geographic information systems such as the UNGGIM: Caribbean Project, the Caribbean Territorial Information Platform for Disaster Prevention (PITCA) and the Strengthening Hydrometeorological Operations and Services in Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SHOCS) project, thereby capitalising on the capabilities and synergies created among these interventions.*

*MEXICO: These two activities seem to overlap. It would be more useful to convene a single Symposium with experts that would address matters related to the Sendai framework, as well as the identification of key activities. During said Symposium, presentations could also be delivered on the other projects that are underway (GGIM, PITCA, SHOCS), in the event that recommendations are presented that could be synergistic with the activities already carried out by the ACS*

*COLOMBIA: (4.6)* ***Establish a mechanism that would allow for the sharing of experiences and the generation of processes to intensify Risk Management, with academic certification.***

*CUBA: 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~~.*

*CUBA: Note: We recommend that this action be presented separately, before the previous action. Therefore it would become 4.2.*

1. **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.

*JAMAICA: While supporting the language in para 5.1, we would wish to call for a clear timetable to be set for the ‘dialogue’ among Member States of the ACS, which will itself provide a clear statement of how we wish to proceed in advancing the initiative both within the ACS and through securing the support of other Member States of the international community via the mandates emanating from the biennial resolution in the Second Committee of the UNGA.*

**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.

*CUBA:* ***Replace with the following****: 5.2.1 The Project entitled “Strategy to control and monitor the lionfish in the Caribbean to mitigate its ecological impact exacerbated by the effects of Climate Change”.*

*CUBA: 5.2.2 The Project entitled “Tackle the Threat of the Sargassum seaweed and help control it on the coasts of the Caribbean Sea”.*

*TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO wishes to convey support for the Action Plan with regard to the invasion of the* ***Sargassum Seaweed,*** *it is not only timely and imperative, but constituted a critical issue affecting the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Tobago. It is suggested that the mechanism of the ACP be used to facilitate collaboration with pertinent African countries in order to facilitate forecasting and hemispheric collaboration since it has been reported that some Coastal African States are also affected.*

*With regard to* ***Coastal Erosion,*** *Trinidad and Tobago strongly supports the implementation of specific measures to facilitate costal protection. The use of natural barriers and the sharing of the associated best practices is also strongly supported. Trinidad and Tobago also supports the strategies to manage and control the* ***invasive lionfish*** *and the collaborative efforts of regional partners.*

**5.3** *CUBA***: ~~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.

*CUBA: Organise the second instalment of the Caribbean Sea Commission Symposium in the triennium, 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 establishment of a data bank that centralizes and disseminates relevant information on major threats to the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea.

*TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO supports the establishment of the Caribbean Sea Commission Databank and urges that the Caribbean Sea Commission develop synergies with other regional projects/initiatives involved in similar activities to mitigate against duplication of efforts and better mobilization of financial resources and skills.*

*JAMAICA: The Government of Jamaica takes no issue with any of the provisions or proposals entailed in this section of the programme of action. We support the continued calls by Member States of the Caribbean Community for the declaration of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of the deliberations at the United Nations. Indeed, they have sought to advance the initiative via the biennial resolution on the matter, which is tabled in the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly. While supporting the language in para 5.1, we would wish to call for a clear timetable to be set for the ‘dialogue’ among Member States of the ACS, which will itself provide a clear statement of how we wish to proceed in advancing the initiative both within the ACS and through securing the support of other Member States of the international community via the mandates emanating from the biennial resolution in the Second Committee of the UNGA.*

**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;

*JAMAICA: We are also supporting the idea of virtual exchanges. The student teacher exchanges should be considered within the context of existing bi-national arrangements.*

*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;

*MEXICO: ~~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;~~*

*There needs to be more information on this proposal. Experience dictates that in order for any exercise involving the movement of students and/or teachers to be successful, funds need to be dedicated to cover transfers, allowances and scholarships. It would be more prudent to focus during this biennium on the other two actions that do not require significant expenditure.*

*COLOMBIA: Colombia suggest this new wording, in order to avoid or prevent the requirement of additional funds, taking into account the comment submitted by Mexico, about the resources that would require an exercise in mobility.*

*6.1.2 Proposed wording is as follows*

*Establish contact with the focal points in each country of the academic mobility with a view to create future synergies which contributes in the deepening of the academic relations in the Greater Caribbean.*

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.

*COLOMBIA: Proposes to add in the next Paragraph:*

*6.2.1.2 Welcome the next meeting of Caribbean Carnivals, to be held in February 2017, in Colombia, within the framework of Barranquilla Carnival.*

*The purpose of the paragraph is to give more relevance to the next meeting of Caribbean Carnivals, as an expression of the great cultural diversity of peoples of the Greater Caribbean.*

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.

*MEXICO: Request further information regarding the proposal on the functioning of this Library, especially matters related to copyright. Should the project call for greater resources, it would be better to focus during this biennium on consolidating the Caribbean Carnival Network and postpone the creation of the virtual library to a subsequent biennium.*

*COSTA RICA: 6.2.2 We fully share the proposal, but we believe that it’s necessary to introduce other issues such as, the economy, culture and cultural undertakings. Visualize the contribution of the culture sector which is considered the most dynamic sector of the modern economy and tourism.*

**7. SPECIAL FUND**

*CUBA****: 7. FUNCTIONING OF THE 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:

***COLOMBIA: 7.1******To Increase activities and meetings with potential donors to*** *finance the projects outlined in the ~~Work Programme~~ Plan of Action 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:*

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| *CUBA:* ***7.1******To Increase activities and meetings with potential donors to*** *finance the projects outlined in the Plan of Action of Havana 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:* | | |
| 7.1.1 Continue one-on-one meetings with donors;  *CUBA: 7.1.1 Continue one-on-one meetings with donors, especially with Observer countries:* |
|  |

* + 1. 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;
    2. Forge strategic alliances with regional partners for joint work;
    3. Promote information exchange among donors;
    4. Participate in “calls for proposals” to present projects to potential donors.

*COLOMBIA: 7.1.5 Participate in calls for project proposals to be presented ~~present projects~~ to potential donors.*

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| *CUBA 7.1.5 Participate in calls to present project proposals to potential donors.* |

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| ***CUBA: 7.2 To Organise activities and meetings with international donors****. Convene an annual 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 Plan of Action of Havana for the 2016-2018 period.  The activities include the following:*  *CUBA: ~~7.2.1 Realizar un foro con potenciales donantes para presentar las iniciativas de la AEC (cada 3 años);~~* |

* 1. **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.

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| *MEXICO: Request further information on these three activities, since they seem to form an integral part of the organisation of the forum, therefore, there is perhaps no need to break them down into separate activities.* |

**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.

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| *CUBA****:*** *7.3 Implement a project for the institutional strengthening of the Special Fund Projects Unit, for the purpose of transforming it into an effective mechanism for formulating projects and managing international financing. The actions include:*  *7.3.1 Formulation of the project for the institutional strengthening of the Projects Unit and search for its financing.*  *7.3.2 Contracting of the 2 remaining experts to enhance the Projects Unit.*  *COSTA RICA:7.3.2 It is considered necessary to think about the budget review, in order to determine whether any funds may be available for this recruitment and define at the same time the status of the Director of the Special Fund, because to date, it’s not included as part of the staff of the Organization, but as a consulting.*  *7.3.3 Validation of the results of the project during the Ministerial Council Meeting and analysis of its sustainability.*  *HAITI: 8. ANTHEM OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES*  ***8.1 Organise a contest at the regional level to create an institutional anthem for the ACS*** *(text and music) entitled: “Ode to the Caribbean Sea” which would be played at official ceremonies of the Association.*  *CUBA: 8. TRAINING ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE GREATER CARIBEBAN*  *8.1 Project entitled “Impact of climate change on the sandy coasts of the Caribbean. Alternatives for its control”.*  *8.2 Project entitled “Mitigating the effects of climate change on the coral reefs of the Caribbean: cultivation and propagation of stony corals and black sea urchins for reef restoration”.*  *CUBA: Note: In the case of 8.4, it is proposed to harmonise efforts with France regarding its proposal to tackle the threat of the Sargassum seaweed and introduce actions for its control.* |

1. *Beneficiaries: The Meteorological and Hydrological Institutes/Services/Offices and Disaster Management Agencies of the following Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)