

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

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**PRELIMINARY DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION REVISION 3**

IV MEETING OF THE SUB-COMMISSION TO PREPARE THE PRELIMINARY

DRAFT PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PERIOD 2016-2018

ACS SECRETARIAT: APRIL 14TH, 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 3**

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 indentified in this document.

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”.

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;
    3. Develop a process for the Certification of Destinations within the framework of the Sustainable Tourism Indicators;
    4. 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 at Greater Caribbean booths set up at important International Tourism Fairs.

**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.

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.

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).

* + 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; 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 WILL PRESENT AN ALTERNATIVE DRAFT OF THIS PARAGRAPH TO BE INCORPORATED ONCE RECEIVED.*

*Note: Colombia considers it relevant to reiterate the suggestion made in the 30th Special Committee Meeting of Trade and External Economic Relations, concerning the importance of a Working Group to analyse the possibility of granting reciprocal tariff preferences between the countries of the Greater Caribbean, with the goal of consolidating the integration process and increasing trade flows.*

* 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. Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean.

This forum seeks to promote trade, investment and knowledge-sharing among businessmen, businesswomen and general entrepreneurs of the Greater Caribbean.

***Note****: Cuba suggests the inclusion of this action, which was in earlier versions. Mexico had its reservations in the past since the forum was also part of the Plan of Action of Petion Ville and never materialised due to the absence of a headquarters. Cuba is offering to host this event in Santiago de Cuba in 2017.*

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.

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 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.
  2. **The Port and Maritime Strategy of the Greater Caribbean.** 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.
     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).
     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.
  3. **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.
     2. Define cooperative actions with international agencies within the maritime and aviation sphere to enhance and facilitate connectivity within the region.
     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.

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 for disaster risk management.

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:

**4.1** **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.

***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.

***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.

***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.

***Note****: This would become 4.7.*

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.*

* 1. **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.

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

4.5.1. **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.

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

4.5.2. **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.

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

**5. CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION**

The Caribbean Sea Commission is cognisant of its commitment to the preservation of the Caribbean Sea as the common patrimony of the countries of the region 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 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”.

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

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

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 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;

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.        FUNCTIONING OF THE SPECIAL FUND**

**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:

* + 1. Continue one-on-one meetings with donors, especially with Observer countries;
    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 to present project proposals to potential donors.

**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:

* + 1. Define activities and dates for events;
    2. Identify all donors to be invited;
    3. Organise and execute activities and meetings.

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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.

7.3.3 Validation of the results of the project during the Ministerial Council Meeting and analysis of its sustainability.

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”.

***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)