

COORDINATING CARIBBEAN COOPERATION

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

**25th INTERSESSIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 28TH ORDINARY
MEETING OF THE ACS MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

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(Virtual Meeting)

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ACS

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES



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PRESENTATION OF THE ACS

In a region characterized by hosting different intergovernmental and multilateral entities, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), with 28 years of existence, is positioned as a unique creation, conceived to enable a space for exchange and dialogue oriented towards practical and complementary cooperation among its members, twenty-five (25) Member States and ten (10) Associate States, on five issues that are handled more effectively and with greater impact at the regional level:

- i. the protection and preservation of the Caribbean Sea, through the recognition of the latter as a Special Zone, and concrete actions to ensure environmental integrity and adaptation to climate change in the Region;
- ii. disaster risk reduction;
- iii. sustainable tourism;
- iv. transportation; and
- v. trade and economic relations.

Conceiving the region as the Greater Caribbean gives the ACS the capacity to innovate common solutions and platforms, inclusive of digital alternatives, to address the issues that arise from the five (5) priorities mentioned above. This is because each and every one of the aforementioned focal areas are interrelated and

require comprehensive interventions in which all countries of the Greater Caribbean participate as a whole.

Along these lines, the ACS offers a crucial platform for the development of the Greater Caribbean, by not only uniting countries and territories linked by the Caribbean Sea, but also by rescuing the best practices and visions that the actors have to offer in a complementary and non-competitive manner. It is in this way that the ACS was able to materialize, through its Membership, the construction of an Action Plan for 2022-2028, which not only outlines the route to follow in the activation of technical cooperation in the five (5) focal areas of the ACS, but also ensures the comprehensiveness of other cross-cutting issues such as the attention to the most vulnerable, digitization, and technology.

Its inception dates back to an initiative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) following the recommendation of the '92 West Indian Commission Report, "Time for Action", whereby the countries of the Community decided to expand their economic and commercial spaces to reach out to countries with a common denominator, the Caribbean Sea. Thus, the ACS is the only one in the region that brings together a wide range of English-, Spanish-, French- and Dutch-speaking countries and territories, but also sub-regions, with international legal personality (CARICOM - Treaty of Chaguaramas) and three other groups specially configured to give it a very particular identity within the Association, the Central American Group (Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua); the Group of 3 (Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela) and the Non-Grouped (Cuba, Panama and the Dominican Republic). All derive their shared identity from the Caribbean Sea.

The convening power of the ACS is harnessed to provide a high-level space in which politics and

science can dialogue on the common theme of the Caribbean Sea and the tangible and intangible human endeavors that depend on it. Consequently, as envisioned by CARICOM, the ACS mission is green and blue: the imperative to ensure sustainability through coordinated, south/south and triangular cooperation.

Its Convention clearly establishes its main functions and purposes: i) consultation, ii) cooperation and iii) concerted action, in pursuit of the sustained development of the Greater Caribbean in the cultural, economic, social, scientific and technological fields (Article 3); as well as the development of the potential of the Caribbean Sea and the promotion of an expanded economic space for trade and investment that offer opportunities for cooperation and concerted action.

The ACS intimately encompasses within its operational space a subgroup of Founding Members and Observer Organizations which, like the ACS itself, give viability to the various multilateral cooperation efforts of the Region: Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Central American Integration System (SICA), Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA), Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), Economic Commission for the Caribbean and Latin America (ECLAC) and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), with special attention, according to the Summit mandate, to the coordination between the ACS, CARICOM and SICA. By convening meetings of the Secretariats of these entities (the Inter-Secretariat Meetings), the ACS seeks to coordinate the cooperation efforts of these entities to achieve greater synergy, thus avoiding the duplication of efforts. The ACS, therefore, constitutes itself as *the secretariat of the secretariats* at the service of its Membership with the capacity to multiply the number and

impact of development interventions of the development partners working with it.

The ACS has 29 Observer countries, 6 observer organizations and 16 social actors, and are the privileged development partners with whom the Association is in constant dialogue for the aim of jointly developing development interventions.

Within the governance of the institution, there are two (2) permanent organs (art. 7): 1) the Ministerial Council and 2) the Secretariat. Regarding the first, the Ministerial Council is the main policy-making and guiding body of the Association, in the context of the purposes and functions (art. 8). Among its functions are (Art. 9): i) determining ACS actions, policies and programs, ii) analyzing and adopting the ACS Work Program, among others.

The main function of the Special Committees is to assist the Ministerial Council in promoting practical cooperation actions, composed in accordance to the requests of the Member States or Associate Members that so desire (art. 5, 6 and 7 of Agreement 7/95). Among the functions of the Special Committees are to propose, submit, follow up and evaluate the annual Work Programme, among other activities (art. 8 of Agreement 7/95).

These organs are ultimately guided by the Summit of Heads of State and/or Government that constitutes the ACS Membership, which takes place every three (3) years to review and reaffirm policy, identify priorities for cooperation and, as necessary, define the principles and practices that underpin ACS cooperation.

The ACS institutional and process trajectory towards the IX ACS Summit and events such as the VII International Cooperation Conference in Havana, Cuba, and the ACS Business Forum, to be held in Antigua, Guatemala in 2023, have

been mapped out to ensure that the Summit showcases:

- i. the renewed focus of the ACS on overcoming regional challenges through tangible cooperation activities at the macro regional level in the Greater Caribbean, following the priority areas set out in the 2022-2028 Action Plan; and
- ii. the efforts being made at the Secretariat level to best equip itself at the policy, governance and process levels to attract and coordinate the implementation of cooperation

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS

Since the adoption of the Plan of Action 2022-28 by the XXVII Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council in May 2022, and under the Pro Tempore Presidency (PTP) of Guatemala, the ACS is focused on highlighting the Implementation Plan and sharing it with the different stakeholders during the VI International Cooperation Conference in Havana, Cuba on November 10-11, 2022. The Implementation Plan should be approved at the VI Special Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council to be held on September 21, 2022 in New York, followed by the IX Summit of ACS Heads of State and/or Government to be held on May 9 and 12, 2023 respectively in Antigua, Guatemala.

In this regard, seeking to coordinate the implementation of the Plan of Action in the context of the institutional framework of the ACS, the Secretary General is holding meetings with his counterparts from the founding organizations of the ACS, namely the different Secretary General of CARICOM, SICA and SIECA, in order to identify joint actions to generate complementarity between the Agendas, which in turn will avoid duplication of efforts and, above all, give added value to the very nature of each

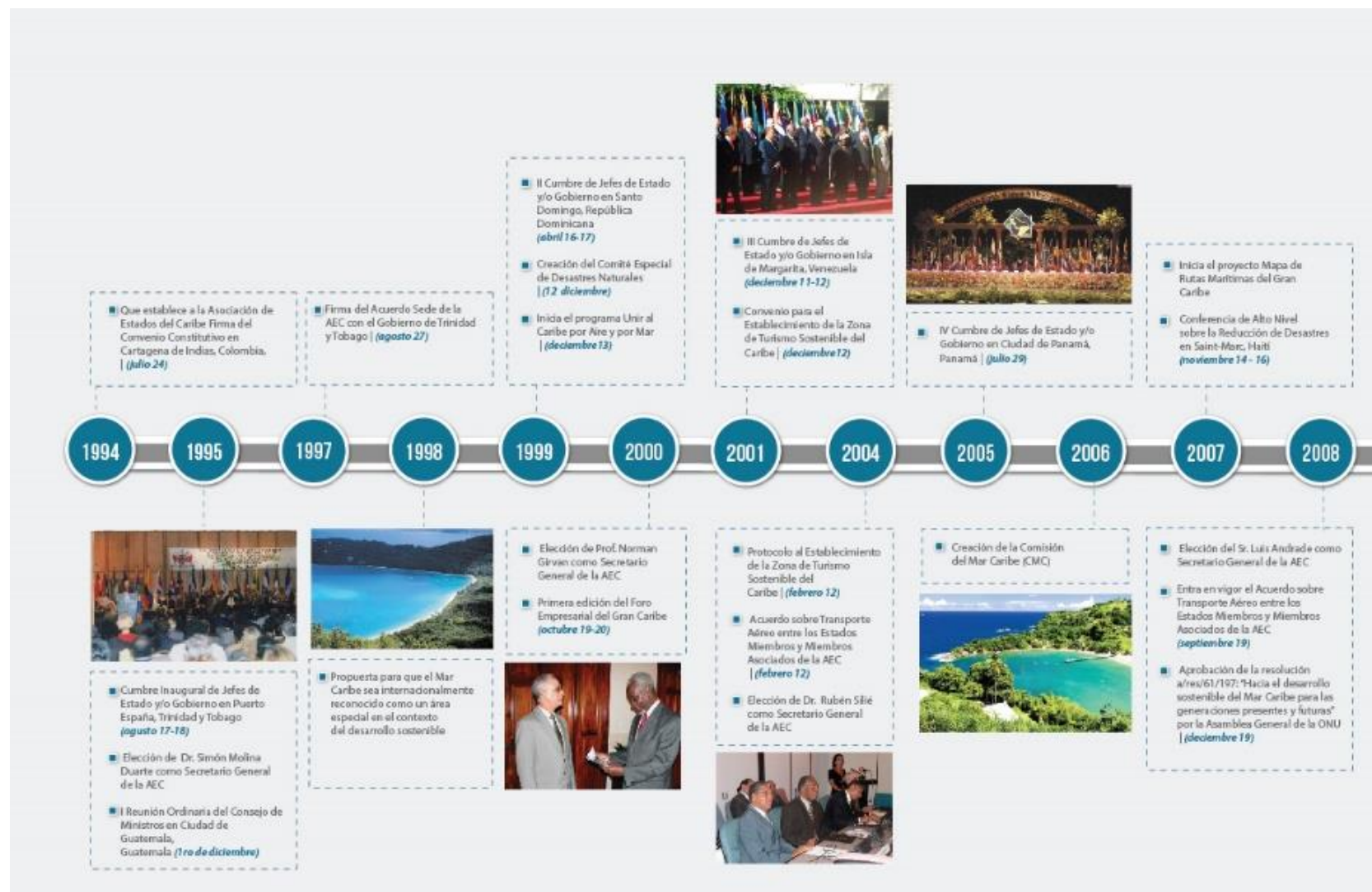
sub-region and the differentiation that the Greater Caribbean region represents.

Likewise, for the last quarter of the year, the Secretary General is developing an active agenda of meetings to mobilize fresh financial resources; bi-lateral, with Regional and Multilateral Agencies and Banks, including a visit to Brussels to talk with Senior Officials of the European Union, in the search for new alliances that will enable the development of the priorities established in the Implementation Plan approved by the Ministerial Council and the Work Programme.

It has also established a strategic approach with other important players in the development equation for Public Private Partnerships (PPP): countries, private sector, and the chambers organized within the sectors, all of which allow in the medium and long term to impose a new approach on the issues that fall within the competence of the private sector, which will bring benefits in the areas of trade, transportation and sustainable tourism to all the Membership, areas negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges facing the Greater Caribbean region (see Annex 1 - Project Portfolio).

Finally, in order to facilitate an increasingly dynamic, sustainable and relevant International Cooperation, the Secretary General works closely with the current and successive PPT in communicating the vision and needs so that Member States and Associate Members activate their bilateral and sub-regional diplomatic channels of cooperation to jointly advance in attracting cooperation in the service of the Greater Caribbean as a whole.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ACS





- Puesta en marcha del proyecto Fortalecimiento de las Operaciones y Servicios Hidrometeorológicos en los Pequeños Estados Insulares en Desarrollo del Caribe



- V Cumbre de Jefes de Estado y/o Gobierno, Pétion Ville, Haití (abril 26)
- Entrada en vigor de la Convención que Establece la Zona de Turismo Sostenible del Caribe (durante la presidencia temporal de México, noviembre 6)

- La CMC organiza simposio regional: Retos, Diálogo y Cooperación hacia la Sostenibilidad del Mar Caribe (CMC), contó con la participación de 18 países
- 36 estudiantes de tres países participaron en un programa intensivo del idioma francés y cultura de Guadalupe



- Elección de la primera mujer Secretaria General de la AEC, Dra. June Soomer
- VII Cumbre de Jefes de Estado y/o Gobierno en La Habana, Cuba (junio 4) en donde se aprueba la revitalización de la Asociación
- Bielorrusia, Bolivia y Uruguay se convierten en Observadores de la AEC



- Se aprueba la reestructuración de la Secretaría en la XXIII Reunión Ordinaria del Consejo de Ministros en la Isla de Margarita, Venezuela
- Las Islas Virgenes Británicas se convierten el X Miembro Asociado



- Elección de Ing. Rodolfo Sabonge como Secretario General de la AEC

2010

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

- Elección del Dr. Alfonso Múnera como Secretario General de la AEC
- Diálogo para identificar las oportunidades de comercio entre los Estados Miembros de la región del Gran Caribe (julio 11-12)



- Entrada en vigencia del Acuerdo Regional de Cooperación en Desastres Naturales (31 de marzo, este acuerdo fue promovido por México durante su presidencia del Consejo de Ministros en 2013)
- VI Cumbre de Jefes de Estado y/o Gobierno en Mérida, México (abril 30)
- La AEC facilita reunión entre delegaciones de Guyana y Venezuela para discutir mecanismos para destinado a la eventual delimitación marítima entre los dos países.



- Grupo de Trabajo sobre propuestas y recomendaciones concretas para la revitalización
- Inicia el Proyecto de Erosión Costera con USD 4 Millones
- Palestina, Japón y Los Emiratos Arabes Unidos (EAU) se convierten en Observadores de la AEC



- VII Cumbre de Jefes de Estado y/o Gobierno en Managua, Nicaragua (marzo 29)

