**25th MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR TRANSPORT**

ACS Secretariat, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, October 14th, 2016.

**RAPPORTEUR’S REPORT**

<Mexico>

The 25th Meeting of the Special Committee for Transport (SCT) was held at the ACS Secretariat in Port-of-Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on October 14th, 2016. The head table comprised Jamaica as Chairman of the SCT, represented by High Commissioner for Jamaica to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, H.E. David Prendergast; Antigua and Barbuda as Vice-Chairman, represented by H.E. Dwight C. R. Gardiner, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the ACS; H.E. Dr June Soomer, Secretary General of the ACS; and Mr Arturo López-Portillo Contreras, Director of Transport and Disaster Risk Reduction of the ACS. In its capacity as Rapporteur, Mexico was represented by H.E. Jesús Alberto López González, Ambassador of Mexico to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Meeting was attended by representatives of fourteen (14) Member States, four (4) Observer Countries, one (1) Founding Observer and ten (10) International Organisations. The complete list of participants is attached to this document as **Annex 1**.

1. **Opening Ceremony**

**Jamaica**, in its capacity as Chair of the SCT, declared the 25th Meeting of the Special Committee for Transport open, welcomed all participants and thanked them for attending.

**The Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds**, Minister of Works and Transport of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, issued opening remarks. He welcomed all the meeting participants on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT), in particular the recently appointed Secretary General, H.E. Dr June Soomer. Minister Hinds wished H.E. Dr Soomer the very best and he expressed confidence that the ACS would be steered properly during her term in office. He indicated that he was advised that this work was driven by the Havana Plan of Action 2016-2018 under the theme “Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea”. He declared that the work being done at the ACS was significant to the region in expanding trade, investment, multi-destination tourism and functional cooperation among member states. Minister Hinds was pleased to learn, through conversations with the Secretary General and others, that the ACS would be undergoing a significant shift in its focus for the ensuing term. Minister Hinds then stated that he understood that the organisation would be working towards strengthening small ports in the Caribbean basin with an aim to improve their competitiveness. He linked this to the work currently in development under the Maritime Division of his Ministry. Minister Hinds then explained that in East Trinidad, there was a new port being developed which would act as a fast ferry point to Tobago. He stated that as the industry grew so should the region’s response to it. The modernisation of the port system was high on the agenda of the GORTT given the added security concerns associated with the sector and the proposed institutional reform of the ACS had provided an added impetus to improve transport facilities.

Minister Hinds then wished the forum great success and declared that the GORTT stood ready to fulfil their responsibility in advancing the work of the ACS.

**The Chair of the SCT,** H.E. David Prendergast, thanked the Honourable Fitzgerald Hinds for his remarks and noted the Minister’s statement that the GORTT remains committed to continued cooperation with the ACS.

**The Secretary General of the ACS,** H.E. Dr June Soomer, thanked Minister Hinds for his warm words and welcomed all participants to the meeting. H.E. Dr Soomer stated that transport was about the people and that organisations would not continue to operate at the levels of governments and technicians only. She then said that more attention must be focused on transportation and related issues of security, competitiveness and cooperation. H.E. Dr Soomer posited that the region could only become more competitive if transport issues were addressed, as transport represents a third of the cost of any good produced in the region. She also noted that currently, the Directorate of Transport was attached to the Directorate of Disaster Risk Reduction which should be reviewed as it did not seem to be a natural fit. The role and location of transport within the organisation should be examined and the Secretary General would use this meeting as an opportunity to address the location of the Transport Directorate. The Secretary General then reminded meeting participants that the preservation of the Caribbean Sea was the most important issue within Transport.

**The Chair of the SCT** thanked the Secretary General for her remarks and acknowledged that transport was indeed important to the region as well as to his home country, Jamaica. He noted that critical to the 2017-2018 ACS Work Programme would be the implementation of the instruments mechanisms and conditions for improving the efficiency of the transport sector, and called for a high level of participation by the attendees in the meeting’s discussions.

The Chair of the SCT then welcomed the new Director of Transport and Disaster Risk Reduction warmly and stated that the SCT was looking forward to working with the Director.

**The Director of Transport and Disaster Risk Reduction of the ACS**,Mr Arturo López-Portillo Contreras welcomed meeting participants. He mentioned that he had been born and raised in Mexico and for the last twenty years, he had resided in the Greater Caribbean Region (GCR); because of this, he was familiar with the challenges that the region faced. He noted that this meeting was part of the process of identifying and appreciating the issues in transport. He explained that he would give a brief report of the status of projects while the experts to follow would give a more detailed presentation. The Director then stated that he would identify potential areas for greater collaboration and opportunities for activities which could further projects currently underway.

**The Chair** thanked the Director for his comments and stated that the SCT was undergoing the process of improving and strengthening projects.

1. **Approval of the Agenda and Procedural Matters**

**The Chair** asked if there were any change requests regarding the Agenda. As there were none, the agenda was formally declared approved.

1. **Presentation of the Directorate’s Report and the ACS Work Programme 2017-2018**

**Mr Arturo López-Portillo Contreras** thanked the Chair for the introduction and explained that his presentation would include each one of the projects which belong to the ACS Havana Plan of Action 2016-2018 and would detail their background, status and perspectives for the future. He noted the expectation that all meeting participants would be informed of further opportunities for collaboration and that at the end of the meeting specific agreements would be made. The Director acknowledged the work of the previous Director, Mr George Nicholson and the arrival of the new Research Assistant, Ms Kenika Espinosa. He also thanked all the staff within the Directorate for their efforts in organising the meeting.

The ACS Director stated that the Havana Plan of Action comprises the following projects: Maps of Greater Caribbean Maritime Routes, the Greater Caribbean Port and Maritime Strategy, and the Senior Port Management Course. He then stated that the “Maps of Greater Caribbean Maritime Routes" project started a few years ago and was now into Phases IV and V which had been funded by the Government of Mexico. The project was an initiative of the Ministry of Transport of Cuba and was being conducted by the Central American Commission for Maritime Transport (COCATRAM) and the Maritime Authority of Panama (AMP). This project had the aim of increasing intra-regional maritime transport and trade. The Director indicated that the COCATRAM representative would go into greater detail regarding the project’s progress, its funding, data gathering, updating the project website and methods to ensure sustainability.

The Director then went on to speak about the “Greater Caribbean Port and Maritime Strategy” which he said could be seen in both the Havana Plan of Action and the Pétion-Ville Plan of Action 2013-2015. He noted that a Study on the Port and Maritime Strategy in the GCR had been conducted. The Director stated that one of the outcomes of this study efficine recommendations regarding capacity building at the senior level in small maritime ports in the region.

The Director then explained that Terms of Reference (TOR) for the “Caribbean Port and Maritime Strategy” had been developed by the COCATRAM, the Ministry of Transport of Cuba and the AMP. From these Terms of Reference, the first activity that was conducted was a study, which was funded by the Agence Française de Development (AFD); the results of this study were presented in a final report which was circulated in 2014. Following recommendations from this specific study and the Havana Plan of Action, a “Senior Port Management Course” would be designed and implemented in 2017 by the ACS, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the Port Management Association of the Caribbean (PMAC) among others. Under the work plan, the Director indicated that the ACS would convene expert meetings and design needs-based surveys to further define initiatives for the enhancement of small ports.

The Director then moved on to the Air Transport Agreement (ATA) which was signed in 2004, entered into force on September 19th 2008 with 13 ratifications to date; the latest accession which occurred in 2014 was that of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. The Director noted that the ACS would continue to encourage member states to accede to this document in order to meet the need for a general aviation policy in the region. The Director stated that the ACS would continue with efforts toward connectivity, defining cooperative actions and convening meetings of experts under the theme of connectivity. This meeting of experts, he noted, would be convened in 2017 in conformance with the Havana Plan of Action. He also referenced two important guidelines that had been circulated: 1) Guidelines for the Granting of Operating Permits to Airlines for Scheduled or Non-Scheduled Commercial Routes within and between the Territories of the Members and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States and 2) Guidelines on the compatibility of air and airport service quality indicators. The Director then said that these two documents were worth reviewing and taking into consideration.

Also under the theme of connectivity, the Director listed a few of the meetings that had been attended recently by the ACS. Additionally, he stated that part of the ACS’ communication strategy was to put out monthly articles in the local newspapers.

**The** **Chair** thanked the Director for his presentation detailing the progress of the various Directorate projects.

**The Secretary General** commented that the ACS was looking at positioning itself in terms of relevance to its Member States and this could only come from adding value. She then reminded participants that this was a highly political organisation and that the ACS was answerable to the governments within the region. H.E. Dr Soomer posited that, within each Directorate, it should be very clear how the work programmes relate to the Plan of Action that guided the ACS’ activities and how Member States could benefit from these projects. The aim of every Directorate, she declared, was to reach the greatest coverage of Member States. She stated that timelines of project results were very important. H.E. Dr Soomer also revealed that she had requested a gap analysis of the projects in the ACS and would be looking at ways in which the gap could be bridged in an effort to improve sustainability. The Secretary General explained that because of this, all projects should be able to relate to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and governments should be able to see the interface between science and technology and policy. Transport, she said, was perhaps the most political issue that the ACS covered as governments were highly involved with providing infrastructure. In the future, H.E. Dr Soomer would like to see a greater emphasis on research including statistics which could be presented to governments to ensure continuity.

**The Chair** thanked the Secretary General for her comments and informed participants that a break was in order.

1. **Report on the project: “Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean”**

**Ing. Pedro Suarez Reyes,** from the Cuban Ministry of Transport andProject Author-Coordinator (Cuba), stated that the work under the project “Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean” was in conformity with the Pétion Ville Plan of Action. Ing. Reyes posited that the Caribbean Sea should no longer be seen as a barrier but rather as a linkage between Member States of the ACS. He noted that the remarks and opinions of the SCT were of great value to the steering committee. He then handed over to Lic. José Dopeso who was assisted by Lic. Flor Pitty from the Panama Maritime Authority (AMP) in continuing the technical segment of the presentation.

**Lic. José Dopeso,** representative of the Central American Commission for Maritime Transport (COCATRAM), excused the absence of the Executive Director of COCATRAM but said that they would both return in a month or two to formally visit the Secretary General and the Director of Disaster Risk Reduction and Transport.

COCATRAM reported that the project database currently had information for 42 countries and 100 ports. He further stated that in 2015, there were more than 3,000 visits to the project website, which included users from countries outside of the region.

Mr Dopeso stated that the project was being solicited by countries with ports along the Pacific coast of Latin America, leading to the proposal of the “Maritime Routes of Mesoamerican Countries along the Pacific Coast” project. He posited that the tool could be a window to the GCR but would need more resources to ensure its sustainability.

Mr Dopeso stated that a new feature of the project tool allowed the user to see the exchange of imports and exports between 25 countries of the GCR. He also noted that there were 40 ferry companies in the GCR and that through this tool it would soon be possible to see the routes and schedules of the ferries and cruise ships in the region. He demonstrated how user-friendly the tool was and the types of information it made accessible regarding services in the region. Mr Dopeso and Mr Suarez encouraged those at the SCT to write the team if they would like further information regarding the tool. These requests, they assured, would be responded to promptly.

**The Secretary General** commented that she felt reassured by this project and was pleased by its development. She also disclosed that she would like to have an inventory of the ACS which would show the tangible assets of the region and had already spoken to a geospatial team to create a map showing land mass, beaches, wetlands and infrastructure. She would also like to see, with regard to protecting the Caribbean Sea, detailed information on the maritime traffic. H.E. Dr Soomer noted that the information given in the presentation helped to give definition to the ACS. H.E. Dr Soomer described the ACS as the “best kept secret” in the GCR and as part of a new communications strategy, she requested that the tool be launched publicly. Funding would come once people understood the value of the project.

**The Director** extended congratulations to the team for the development of the tool and commented that the information presented in the project was very impressive. He encouraged the team to continue the good work.

**The Chair** was impressed as well with the scale of the project and the inclusion maritime routes in the Pacific. He also had the same question as to how the tool would be marketed and suggested that the communication strategy be looked at. He extended his congratulations again for the work put into the project and stated that he trusted that this would be put to good use to benefit the ACS Member States.

1. **Report on the project: “Port and Maritime Strategy for the Greater Caribbean Region”**

**Ing. Pedro Suarez Reyes** stated that this strategy was the blueprint for the comprehensive development of the port and maritime sector of the GCR. The general aim was to improve competitiveness, reduce the barriers that obstruct shipping lines and increase affordability. He indicated that what was needed was clarity on the points of commonality, the strategies that need to be developed and regional objectives and priorities. Mr Suarez stressed that timelines and costs of achieving these goals must be considered. So far, a preliminary assessment of the port and maritime sector in the GCR was conducted which, while not exhaustive, allowed for the key points to develop the project to be seen. This project combined with the “Map of Maritime Routes” project demonstrated to countries the benefits and the linkages between national development plans and regional objectives. He proposed that the execution of these ideas be revisited as soon as possible by the SCT to clarify priorities.

**The Chair** thanked Mr Suarez for his presentation and noted that it was impossible to have the kind of connectivity desired without regional integration and a clear definition of priorities.

**Director López-Portillo Contreras** thanked Mr Suarez for his presentation and asked for the proposal of the team to move the SCT forward.

**Mr Suarez** replied that the team proposed to review the Terms of Reference since time had passed; he noted however that the main principles would stay the same. He indicated that this could be done within one month’s time and sent to the Secretariat to be distributed to members of the SCT for comments.

**Mr Dopeso** added that in order to be more competitive, the region must act as a bloc. He requested that the SCT work towards tailoring the regional legal framework, taking into account the international maritime laws to which the countries were signatories, for example, the IMO convention.

**The Chair** thanked those who commented and reiterated that the team would send the amended TOR to the Secretariat within a month to be distributed to the SCT.

1. **Presentation on “Public/Private Partnerships for enhancing port efficiency”**

**Ms Sabine Bazajet**, Communications and External Relations Officer of CEI.BA, presented on the Cargo Community System for the Port and Maritime Community of Guadeloupe.Ms Bazajet stated that her company CEI.BA was a private company that launched more than ten years ago and developed a Cargo Community System (CCS) also known as a Single Window or Port Community System. She explained that this process encouraged strategic partnerships and integrated all the actors within the supply chain through a method of private and public partnership. The CCS has created a paperless system which is streamlined, includes the participation of all stakeholders and is environmentally friendly. Ms Bazajet explained that only the Customs office in the countries would have access to all the information within the CCS. The company had bases in 20 countries in the following regions: the Caribbean, South America, Europe, West Africa, South Africa and South East Asia. Within the Caribbean, they were operating in Martinique, French Guiana, Guadeloupe and, since January 2016, Jamaica. Ms Bazajet informed that CEI.BA had begun discussions with Antigua and Barbuda and St. Lucia as well as other OECS countries. According to Ms Bazajet, the CCS improved the efficiency, connectivity and competitiveness of Caribbean ports through a system of training and public-private partnerships.

**The Chair** thanked Ms Bazajet for her presentation and noted that it was a very comprehensive overview of the public private partnerships in the region’s maritime sector. He questioned the strategy of the company with regard to replicating the project and expanding into other countries in the region.

**Ms Bazajet** stated that implementing the CCS was a very long process and that it could take up to 9 years to get the system up and running as every single process must first be analysed and personnel had to receive training.

**The Secretary General** asked whether any of the ACS countries had similar systems to the CCS.

**Trinidad and Tobago** indicated that they had a Single Window system which was similar to the CCS as well as a Geographic Information System (GIS) advanced notification system.

**Panama** stated that they too had a Single Window system which enabled the use of electronic documents, thereby creating a paperless environment in the maritime sector. This Single Window involved several government agencies and serves to strengthen linkages between the government and customs.

**Mexico** commended the project’s innovativeness and indicated that they were working with countries in the region to expedite the transit of goods with very encouraging results in programmes developed with Central American countries. The representative stated that political will and greater cooperation between customs authorities were needed to move this initiative forward.

**The Chair** thanked Ms Bazajet again for her presentation and requested that the company keep in contact with the ACS SCT regarding future partnerships.

1. **Presentation on “Air Transport in the Caribbean Region: A Cuban Perspective”**

**Ing. Pedro Suarez Reyes** stated that the Air Transport Agreement (ATA) had been signed by 13 countries in the GCR. This was geared towards facilitating multilateral alliances and to strengthen air services in the region. Mr Suarez appealed for those countries who had not yet signed the agreement to undertake the relevant analyses and as soon as they possibly could, send the required communication to Cuba. He noted that legal frameworks changed but the consensus of all nations on this very important document was required so that implementation could take place in order to address issues in the air transport sector. Mr Suarez indicated that Cuba had agreements signed with Copa Airlines and others and wished to establish partnerships with French and English speaking countries in the region. He explained that the Cuban airports were being modified to improve infrastructural capacity to increase the frequency of flights. Mr Suarez suggested that the Secretariat create an ad hoc working group to collaborate with nations to sign and ratify the agreement. The SCT, he stated, should be active at all times and not just once a year for a meeting.

**The Director** commented that he agreed with Mr Suarez and that the Convention should be revisited and the ATA must be analysed in an effort to move forward with ratification.

**Trinidad and Tobago** pointed out that a number of states including Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Suriname and Guyana were already signatories to the CARICOM Multilateral Air Services Agreement and that there were differences between this and the ATA. Given that both documents were said to take precedence over any agreement in force, unless harmonisation took place these countries could not sign the ATA.

**Venezuela** commented that in accordance with the views expressed by the delegation of Cuba with regard to the dynamism and changes in the domestic environment with respect to the air transport sector, the proposed Ministerial 6/08 agreement was under evaluation by the Civil Aviation Authority of Venezuela, keeping in mind that there had been changes in both the domestic regulatory framework of Venezuela as well as changes in the environment of aviation business in the region and the continent. Venezuela, as a signatory to the Agreement on Air Transport of the ACS, expressed its willingness to move forward in this area, while preserving its national interest in accordance with its laws and internal regulations.

**Suriname** stated that they remained committed to air connectivity and earlier this year, Suriname submitted a proposal for a new air carrier which would like to contribute to improving regional connectivity. Suriname was looking at improving the tools within the air sector and updating the service.

**Colombia** stated that they were in approval of the presentations and were delighted with the progress demonstrated so far and the work programme especially the “Maps of Maritime Routes” project. Colombia referenced the agreement between AVIANCA and the Barbados government as a bilateral initiative which had increased travel and partnerships between the two nations. Colombia wished to echo the sentiments of the Secretary General that the ACS’ work should be communicated more widely through academia. Colombia recognised the work of Cuba in the sector in improving the efficiency of air transport and expressed the hope that these efforts would continue year round.

**Mexico** agreed with the position expressed by Colombia that there could be integration in the area of transport. They had examined the development of the ATA to date and while they had not made a decision, they did not rule out the possibility of signing.

**Suriname** indicated thatthe Caribbean Development Bank delivered a presentation recently in the ACS in reference to the documents mentioned and requested that participants take note of this.

**The Chair** noted all the comments made and thanked the presenter. He then suspended the meeting and the official photo of the meeting was taken.

1. **Presentation on the IATA Work Programme**

**Ms Annaleen Bobb**, Regional Area Manager of the International Air Transport Association (IATA),gave a brief overview of her organisation’s objectives, economic outlook, regional challenges and partnerships.

Ms Bobb stated that IATA was the global trade association for the world’s airlines and represented over 84% of global air traffic. IATA, according to Ms Bobb, was responsible for global standard setting in the airline industry and one of their core activities included the billing and settlement program in which they settle debts owed to airlines. The key regional issues they addressed were passenger rights and protection, unruly passengers, taxation and charges, airport infrastructure and guidelines and regulations among others. She noted that while the international airline landscape had changed, within the Caribbean not much had been altered which put stress on air transport infrastructure in terms of profitability, route efficiency and reduces competitiveness. Ms Bobb referenced countries that were indebted to airlines including Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago. She went on to say that IATA understood the reasons for this which included volatile markets, currency restrictions and currency devaluation. The IATA representative informed the SCT that they were working with regional governments to recoup funds owed to airlines, in some cases since February 2016. Another issue in the air transport sector in the region was the taxation burden and unstable organisational structures in which there was a high turnover in upper management personnel, for instance, CEOs. She also said that IATA would like to see regional governments sign on to the Montreal Convention of 1999 as it would protect the rights of passengers and define airline liability for deaths, delays and loss of cargo or baggage. Ms Bobb noted that 8 countries in the region had not yet ratified the Montreal Convention. Additionally Ms Bobb spoke about issues affecting airlines in the region including that of “unruly passengers”. IATA reiterated that it valued the partnerships it had created within the region and looked forward to further collaboration.

**Venezuela** expressed grave concerns with the statement that IATA made concerning debts owed to airlines by countries, in particular Venezuela. Venezuela refuted the statements made by Ms Bobb regarding the supposed debt owed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The Ambassador informed the SCT that the country did not owe any money to airlines as claimed in Ms Bobb’s presentation but rather had faced difficulties in setting out changes for the way in which prices were set by airlines for passengers. The Venezuelan Ambassador stated that the country was not prepared for the airline industry to go against national interests. Venezuela informed the SCT that they had discussed their financial constraints in bilateral forums with many of the countries present. The Venezuelan Ambassador considered the statements made by IATA to be erroneous and that IATA was well aware that Venezuela was experiencing difficulties in obtaining foreign exchange. The country would continue to focus on securing the interests of its citizens and not those of any international organisation.

**The Secretary General** reminded participants that transport was a sensitive political subject and that the use of language was very important to consider in maintaining collaboration. H.E. Dr Soomer noted that sometimes it was the international banking system or other external forces beyond the countries’ control which prevented prompt payments. The region’s governments, she stated, were prepared to work with international bodies such as IATA to improve the situation. She also referenced the comment made about unruly passengers and requested clarification on the term. She mentioned that presentations such as this one were not as well received by governments as they would be to technical teams and for this reason, presenters needed to consider the audience they were addressing.

**The Chair** thanked the presenter and indicated that he too would like more information regarding the term “unruly passenger”.

**Suriname** stated that the ACS region was one of peace and that the Member States could work together to resolve differences. He then requested further information regarding IATA’s statement that there was instability in the regional leadership of airlines.

**Ms Bobb** addressed the comments by stating that the term “unruly passenger” was clearly defined in the convention and would be further elaborated upon by Mr Lutchmedial of the CASSOS. She then explained to Suriname that the data in the presentation was in reference to this year’s change of leadership of Surinam Airways.

**The Chair** noted Ms Bobb’s response and indicated that the vision of an organisation could remain the same despite leadership change.

1. **Presentation on the CASSOS Memorandum of Cooperation with the COCESNA**

**Mr Ramesh Lutchmedial,** Vice-Chairman of the Caribbean Aviation Safety and Security Oversight System (CASSOS), gave a brief background of CASSOS’ history and work within the region, in particular their partnership with the Central American Corporation for Air Navigation Services (COCESNA).

On the 11th May 2016 in Nassau, Bahamas, the CASSOS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the COCESNA, which formulated a framework for enhanced cooperation in a number of areas. The Memorandum established collaboration in the areas of aviation safety, air navigation capacity and efficiency, aviation security, air transport, environmental protection, technical assistance and cooperation and training. Mr Lutchmedial posited that unlike developed states, the region’s small island developing countries could not comply with standards on their own. Mr Lutchmedial indicated that harmonization of standards in the region was an important objective of CASSOS. He emphasised that safety was a critical issue in the aviation industry and explained that the term “unruly passenger” referred to one whose actions on board a flight endangered the safety of the aircraft, the passengers or the crew. Mr Lutchmedial informed the SCT that airline personnel were highly trained in dealing with such situations. He stated that the CASSOS would like to see each country have strict laws regulating air security and serious repercussions for non-compliance.

**Guyana** addressed the issue with regard to the rescreening of passengers by stating that their main concern was with duty-free items.

**Antigua and Barbuda** agreed with the Secretary General that the term “unruly passenger” could be contended. He expressed the concern that the legal framework could be abused in such a way that the victim became the recipient of legal punishment. The high level of training spoken of by the CASSOS representative, he stated, was not always evident in the air industry.

**Mr Lutchmedial** noted that customer service in the air transport sector was not always up to standard and stated that his organisation was looking into this issue.

**The Chair** thanked Mr Lutchmedial for his presentation.

1. **Presentation on the ICAO Work Programme**

**Mr Melvin Cintron**, Regional Director of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), gave a presentation on the ICAO Work Programme and requested that the presentation not be shared beyond the SCT. He detailed the strategy of ICAO to move the region forward in terms of compliance with international standards and conventions. The aim of ICAO was to develop a specific action plan tailored to each member state and to follow up with country implementation through the use of a monitoring and evaluation framework. ICAO also indicated that it was willing and available to source funding for countries in the cases where the political will was present but securing financing was an obstacle. The organisation had been in contact with every single Member State of the ACS and was well aware of the challenges currently being faced. Among its successes, ICAO had certified 23 airports in the region in 2016 when previously the region had only managed to certify 2 or 3 airports at most per year. Mr Cintron indicated as well that all four security audits that were recently conducted in the GCR had been positive. ICAO emphasized that investing in the aviation industry was beneficial to the region’s countries and that in 2017 the Caribbean would be the focus of the organisation.

**The Chair** thanked ICAO for their detailed presentation and for explaining the practicality of compliance with international standards.

**The Secretary General** thencommented that for her first meeting in transport, she was extremely pleased with what she had heard, stating that the SCT was moving in a positive direction. She further declared that she aimed to soon have all projects within the ACS put online so that governments would be able to easily track the progress of these initiatives and transparency of the organisation would be increased.

**Venezuela** commented that the delegation was pleased with the move to rebrand the ACS and declared that the organisation had Venezuela’s continued support in achieving this goal. The Ambassador stated that they were encouraged to hear the clarity of the message given by the Secretary General that the ACS was a political organisation as stated in the Convention and that it was always working in the interest of its Member States. Venezuela noted the Secretary General’s wish that the ACS achieve greater visibility was a goal that all Member States supported. Venezuela then renewed its interest in becoming the Chair of the SCT in 2017 and requested the support of everyone present and the other members of the ACS. The delegation also renewed its concerns with the statements expressed by the IATA representative and questioned the right of IATA to come to the SCT and give erroneous information. The country had already informed IATA of their interest in moving forward using a transparent negotiation process while respecting national interest.

**The Chair** thanked Venezuela for their comments.

1. **Other Matters**

**The Chair** asked Member States to submit the status report of the institutional contacts to the SCT soon. He then requested confirmation of the date for the circulation of the Rapporteur’s report.

**The Director** stated that the contacts would be sent to the SCT shortly. He then said that the Rapporteur’s report would be submitted by the ACS to Mexico and then circulated to the SCT.

1. **Close of the Meeting**

The **Chairman** thanked all meeting participants and all those who gave presentations. He gave a broad overview of the topics presented on and the deliverables expected and then declared the meeting adjourned.