

REPORT OF THE SCST CHAIRMAN, BY MADAME KARINE ROY-CAMILLE, PRESIDENT OF THE MARTINIQUE TOURISM AUTHORITY, AND CHAIR OF THE ACS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

GUATEMALA, 23 JULY 2014

MARTINIQUE ASSUMED THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (SCST), AS APPROVED AT THE XVIII ORDINARY MEETING OF THE ACS MINISTERIAL COUNCIL, HELD IN PANAMA CITY, REPUBLIC OF PANAMA, FEBRUARY 20-22, 2013. CONSEQUENTLY, AS ONE OF THE PRIMARY ACTIVITIES, THE 24TH MEETING OF THE SCST WAS CONVENED AND HELD IN PORT-OF-SPAIN, TRINIDAD, ON JULY 16-17, 2013. THIS MEETING RECEIVED HIGH-LEVEL PARTICIPATION FROM FORTY (40) DELEGATES WHICH INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES FROM SIXTEEN (16) ACS MEMBER AND ASSOCIATE MEMBER STATES AS WELL AS FOUNDING OBSERVER, THE CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANIZATION (CTO) AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS, FAIR TRAVEL AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES. I WISH TO THANK AND COMMEND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, THROUGH ITS MINISTRY OF TOURISM FOR THE SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY EXTENDED, WHICH CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE MEETING.

THE SCST-24 MEETING WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO OUTLINE THE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES IN RELATION TO THE EXECUTION OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORK PROGRAM. IN THIS REGARD, THE PROJECT TO ESTABLISH THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ZONE OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN (STZC) WAS HIGHLIGHTED AS A PRIORITY. IT WAS UNDERSCORED THAT THE STZC SHOULD BECOME THE REFERENCED FRAMEWORK FOR ACS MEMBER COUNTRIES EFFORTS IN RELATION TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM. THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNTRIES DEPOSITING RATIFICATION INSTRUMENTS TO THE **STZC CONVENTION AND PROTOCOL** WAS ALSO REITERATED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA, IN THE CAPACITY AS THE DEPOSITORY STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION'S RATIFICATION INSTRUMENTS, OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED THE ACS, THAT THE STZC

CONVENTION AND ITS ACCOMPANYING PROTOCOL, HAVING RECEIVED THE REQUISITE NUMBER OF RATIFICATIONS, WAS ENTERED INTO FORCE ON **NOVEMBER 6, 2013**. I JOIN THE SECRETARIAT IN EXTENDING ITS CONGRATULATIONS AND APPRECIATION TO ALL THE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE SUBMITTED RATIFICATIONS TO THIS MOST IMPORTANT INSTRUMENT ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR THE GREATER CARIBBEAN, AND URGE THOSE MEMBER STATES WHO HAVE NOT YET DONE SO TO EXPEDITE THIS PROCESS. I ALSO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO APPLAUD THE TEAM OF THE DIRECTORATE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, AS IT IS DUE TO THEIR EFFORTS AND DILIGENCE THAT 12 YEARS AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE CONVENTION WE HAVE FINALLY ACHIEVED THIS RATIFICATION.

ALSO RELATED TO THE STZC IS THE PROJECT TO DEVELOP THE REGIONAL COOPERATION MECHANISM (RCM), WHICH IS FUNDED BY INTERREG AND THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF MARTINIQUE. I AM PLEASED WITH THE PROGRESS THAT HAS BEEN MADE IN RELATION TO THIS PROJECT. WE HAVE RECEIVED THE INCEPTION REPORT FROM THE CONSULTANT AND WILL BE CLOSELY FOLLOWING THEIR WORK AS THIS PROJECT ADVANCES.

AMONG MY MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS PUT FORWARD AND ENDORSED BY THE SCST-24 MEETING, IT WAS AGREED THAT IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE REGIONAL TOURISM INDUSTRY, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO INCREASE COOPERATION AND THE SHARING OF EXPERIENCES IN AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST, WITH THE OBJECTIVE BEING TO INCREASE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TOURISM AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS. THE MEETING UNANIMOUSLY AGREED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ACS AS A FORUM FOR THE SHARING AND EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES ON CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION'S COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES. WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORK PROGRAMME, IT WAS AGREED THAT EFFORTS WOULD BE ORIENTED TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF CONCRETE RESULTS, AVOIDING DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS AND PURSUING PARTNERSHIPS WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES TO INCREASE VALUE AND BENEFITS FOR ACS MEMBER COUNTRIES. A PRIORITY TOPIC IN THIS REGARD, WAS THE NEED FOR GREATER COOPERATION AND DIALOGUE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF **'CONNECTIVITY'** AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THE ACS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION (ALTA), THE CARIBBEAN TOURISM ORGANISATION (CTO) AND THE INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION (IATA) SUCCESSFULLY HOSTED THE **FIRST MEETING OF TOURISM AND TRANSPORT EXECUTIVES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**. THIS HISTORIC MEETING WAS HELD IN CANCUN, MEXICO, NOVEMBER 13TH 2013 ON THE MARGINS OF THE 10TH ANNUAL ALTA AIRLINE LEADERS FORUM AND WAS ATTENDED BY OVER 50 AVIATION AND TOURISM INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES AND HIGH-LEVEL AUTHORITIES FROM THE REGION. AMONG THE MAIN OUTCOMES, THIS MEETING SET THE FRAMEWORK FOR ONGOING DIALOGUE AMONG INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS, AND IDENTIFIED AS KEY TOPICS **AIR-CONNECTIVITY, INTRA-REGIONAL TRAVEL AND IMMIGRATION FACILITATION** FOR INCLUSION IN THE AGENDA FOR A FULL AVIATION DAY MEETING BEING PLANNED FOR 2014.

ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENT WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUPS FOR EACH OF THE FOUR PROGRAMMATIC AREAS OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORK PROGRAMME, COMPRISED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF 3-5 MEMBERS STATES. THIS WAS MANDATED TO ENCOURAGE THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF COUNTRIES IN THE EXECUTION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME, AND ALSO TO PROVIDE ONGOING DIRECTION AND SUPPORT TO THE SECRETARIAT IN FULFILLING THE PRIORITIES AND REQUESTS OF THE SCST. I AM PLEASED THAT TO DATE THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL MEETINGS OF THE WORKING GROUPS FACILITATED BY THE DIRECTORATE, NAMELY THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ZONE OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN, WORKING GROUP FOR THE PROMOTION OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN AND THE WORKING GROUP FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. I AM AWARE THAT THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE PROMOTION OF MULTI-DESTINATION TOURISM HAS NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND I AM ASSURED THAT THIS MEETING WILL SOON TAKE PLACE. I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNTRIES WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED THEIR TIME AND EXPERTISE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKING GROUPS. AN INVITATION IS ALSO EXTENDED TO COUNTRIES WHO HAVE NOT BEEN PARTICIPATING TO NOMINATE A REPRESENTATIVE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETINGS.

AS IT RELATES TO MY PRIORITIES FOR 2014, I WOULD LIKE TO HOST THE THIRD MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF TOURISM OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN OF THE ACS AND PROPOSE THAT WE DISCUSS AND COME TO AGREEMENT REGARDING THE CONVENING OF THIS MEETING.

I WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE ALL COUNTRIES TO SIGN AND RATIFY THE STZC CONVENTION AND PROTOCOL. CURRENTLY 17 COUNTRIES OF THE 31 ACS MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE RATIFIED THE CONVENTION AND I WOULD LIKE THIS INCREASED TO AT LEAST 25 COUNTRIES. THIS WILL STRENGTHEN AND REINFORCE THE STZC.

IN ADDITION I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SPECIFIC DATES AND DEADLINES INDICATED FOR THE PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORK PROGRAMME.

IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE ACS AND THE TEAM OF THE DIRECTORATE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN PARTICULAR, FOR THE EFFICIENCY EXHIBITED AND SUPPORT GIVEN TO MARTINIQUE AND LOOK FORWARD TO A VERY PRODUCTIVE YEAR 2014.