

**ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)  
DIRECTORATE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

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**WORKSHOP ON COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AS AN IMPORTANT  
FACTOR IN STRENGTHENING THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ZONE OF THE  
GREATER CARIBBEAN**

Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: July 10<sup>th</sup> 2017

**RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT**

The **"Workshop on community-based tourism as an important factor in strengthening the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean"** was held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017 on Margarita Island, state of Nueva Esparta in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as part of the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-28).

The workshop was attended by His Excellency Raúl Licausi, Vice Minister for the Caribbean of the Ministry of Popular Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in its capacity as Chairman of the Ministerial Council of the ACS and the Honourable Marleny Contreras, Minister of Popular Power for Tourism of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the capacity as Host Country. In addition, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was represented by the Secretary General, Her Excellency Dr. June Soomer, the ACS Director of Sustainable Tourism, Mr. Julio Orozco and his Advisor, Ms. Tanya Amaya who served as Moderator.

Also present at the workshop were twelve (12) delegations of Member States and Associate Members of the ACS, one (01) Founding Observer and representatives of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as Special Invited Guests. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex A**.

The agenda for the Workshop on "community-based tourism" which was held prior to the start of the Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-28) consisted of presentations by eleven (11) speakers, including contributions by specially invited guests from community-based tourism projects, academics and community leaders.

**I. OPENING CEREMONY**

**H.E. Dr. June Soomer, ACS Secretary General** extended warm greetings to the delegations present, thanking the Member States and Associate Members for participating in the activity, while acknowledging the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for its efforts in supporting the organisation of activities to be undertaken within the framework of the SCST-28 as well as its commitment to fulfilling its mandate as Chair of the Ministerial Council.

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She explained that the Workshop would be an opportunity to focus attention on best practices adopted in the Region in the area of Community-Based Tourism. In addition, she noted that it would serve as a forum to discuss recommendations on the manner in which organizations like the ACS can contribute to making significant achievements in this area of tourism, while highlighting the goal of the ACS to promote strategies that strengthen sustainable tourism in the region.

**H.E. Raúl Licausi, Vice Minister for the Caribbean of the Ministry of Popular Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in its capacity as Chairman of the Ministerial Council of the ACS**, warmly welcomed delegations present, highlighting the importance of the opportunity to demonstrate to the Caribbean people their ability to strengthen community leadership as a means of achieving tourism development in Venezuela and the region.

**The Honourable Marleny Contreras, Minister of Popular Power for Tourism of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the capacity as Host Country**, spoke of the important role of ACS member countries to show the world positive aspects of the Greater Caribbean, as well as to signal that the ACS is a multilateral space that maintains a regional perspective on progress towards sustainable development and the achievement of common goals through a review of long-term strategies towards sustainable tourism.

## **II. PLENARY SESSIONS I AND II**

The **ACS Director of Tourism, Julio Orozco**, opened proceedings by explaining the critical role of raising awareness at the regional level of the importance of community-based tourism as a key element in achieving sustainable tourism. During his presentation, he recounted experiences and lessons learned by the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism arising from the implementation of activities and strategies for co-operation as well as new opportunities for co-operation which are being promoted within the Greater Caribbean. His presentation is attached as **Annex B**.

Subsequently, Venezuelan presenters participated in the plenary session, sharing their experiences and offering institutional support for the development of community-based tourism as a fundamental component in ensuring the implementation of sustainable development, while taking into consideration the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The rest of the day – which was divided into two plenary sessions – provided an opportunity for national experts to present papers. They addressed the topic of community-based tourism as a means of positioning community service as a symbol of economic development so as to strengthen initiatives by local communities serving an opportunity to showcase the local potential of tourism and to consolidate the culture base as well as to strengthen sustainable development in furtherance of the driving principles of the mechanism.

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Below are details on the speakers at the workshop in the order of their presentations.

**1. Training towards community-based tourism: a perspective on sustainability by Mrs. Natalia Mc Carthy**, Manager of Capacity-Building and Tourism Training from INATUR<sup>1</sup>.

Her presentation focused on optimal use of environmental resources towards tourism development, while respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities. It promoted social and productive alternatives for better distribution of wealth and poverty reduction in communities within natural and cultural areas likely to promote the development of community-based tourism. **(Annex C)**

**2. Community-based Sustainable Tourism as an alternative for development in Protected Areas, by Msc. César Aponte, Specialist in Sustainable Development and Climate Change, Colectivo Casa de Cronopios.**

This presentation addressed the participative program of Community-Based Sustainable Tourism managed between 2007 and 2010 by the Ministry of Popular Power for the Environment with Community Councils in three marine Protected Natural Areas of Venezuela: Ciénaga de Los Olivitos, Hueque-Sauca and Gran Morichal. Sustainable community tourism is shown as a useful tool for the social and economic development of impoverished communities, conservation of biodiversity and adaptation to climate change. The participative management model can be replicated in communities and protected areas of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean as part of the Regional Cooperation Agenda for the ODS 2030. **(Annex D)**

**3. Sustainable Tourism Development in *Ciénaga de Los Olivitos*<sup>2</sup>, Eastern Coast of *Lago de Maracaibo* by Mr. Lermith Torres Casanova**, National Experimental University "Rafael María Baralt.

Successful cases of sustainable tourism specifically in the area of *Los Olivitos* along the eastern coast of *Lago de Maracaibo* were identified. It underscored how work with the community can give rise to the strengthening of training initiatives with a view to improving the quality of tourism services in the Region. National and international tourists are attracted to that place given their interest in observing the Caribbean pink flamingo – the symbolic bird of the area. **(Annex E)**

**4. Experience of community-based tourism development in Venezuela by Mr. Richard Martínez Montero**, Manager of Capacity-Building and Training of the National Institute of Tourism (INATUR), Caracas.

He offered practical experiences of sustainable tourism in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela arising from roundtables organised by regional units within INATUR in an effort to identify needs and strengths in exploiting

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<sup>1</sup> *Instituto Nacional de Turismo* = Venezuela's national institution responsible for tourism

<sup>2</sup> A protected area on the western side of the Venezuela

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sustainable tourism destinations as part of a proposal by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for consideration in the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean. **(Annex F)**

**5. Sustainable development in *Playa de Agua* by Mr. Rafael Oliveros,** Majority Shareholder at *Operadora LIA RAF C.A.*

He presented the eco-tourism Project: *Punta Cavo Blanco - Punta Cazonero*, located in the northern part of Margarita Island. In addition, he described the case of *Parque Nacional Canaima*<sup>3</sup> in which the strategic alliance between the Ministry of Tourism and private enterprise gave rise to the involvement of the indigenous community of Pemona in the tourism sector. **(Annex G)**

**6. Community-based tourism development in *Los Roques* by Mr. Pergiorgio Serloni,** Member of the Executive Board and the Community Council of Los Roques.

He spoke of initiatives that have led to community-based tourism development at *Isla de los Roques*, by satisfying community policies to improve the quality of life for the inhabitants of this tourist destination. **(Presentation is unavailable)**

**7. *Competencia Neotropical de Avistamiento de Aves*<sup>4</sup> as a tool for rural sustainable development by Mr. Aureliano Parra Rosales,** Manager, *Oxypogon Ecoaventuras C.A* (rural development with bird-based tourism)

Birdwatching was presented as a tool for sustainable rural development and characterized as an innovative and inclusive factor in entrepreneurship that can strengthen a network of bird-based community routes as alternatives for sustainable income for the rural population. **(Annex H)**

**8. *Artisanal Margarita: an option for community-based tourism on Margarita Island* by Mr. Fredery Calderon Uztari,** President of *Asociación Civil Margarita Posible*.

He highlighted the importance of art and craft as a means of cultural production with the potential of being promoted as a tourism attraction and a source of income for craftsmen. This is done through marketing of community craftwork, promoting local development while respecting the idiosyncrasies of the populations and developing their own local brand. **(Annex I)**

**9. Biodiversity and sustainable outlook in the provision of tourism services in Venezuela by Mrs. Aura Marcucci,** Manager responsible for international and institutional relations at *Fundación Los Guardianes De La Biodiversidad* and a tour operator with *Ecovenezuela*

She presented sustainable guidelines for the provision of tourism services in Venezuela as part of a new model of national development based on the conservation of biodiversity and comparative advantage. This is reflected in

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<sup>3</sup> A national park

<sup>4</sup> A bird watching competition

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its biological diversity and links all of the ecosystems present in the Latin American region. **(Annex J)**

### **10. Agritourism and rural and community development by Mr. Amilcar Salas Saigas**, Representative of National Chamber of Agrotourism.

He presented a conceptual framework for community-based and rural tourism and later spoke of the importance for owners of guesthouses. He added that agritourists actively participate in the conservation of the environment, through protection of biodiversity, the natural environment and historical/cultural heritage. **(Annex K)**

## **III. CLOSE OF WORKSHOP**

During this Agenda item, the presenters interacted with workshop participants. The Workshop was brought to a close with a vote of thanks by the Sustainable Tourism Directorate of the Association of Caribbean States.