

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

21st MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, September 20-21, 2012

Final Rapporteur's Report

1. Opening ceremony

The 21st Meeting of the Special Committee on Transport of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was held in Port of Spain, the Republic Trinidad and Tobago, on September 20-21, 2012. The Executive Board of the Special Committee was made up of **Cuba** as Chairman, represented by Mr. Pedro Suárez Reyes, Official of the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Cuba, **Venezuela** and **Jamaica** as Vice Chairmen, represented by Carolina Caraballo, Advisor of the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Trinidad and Tobago and Keisha Kal Witter, Counsellor in the Jamaican Permanent Mission to the ACS, **Costa Rica**, represented by Tatiana Burgos Ramírez, Charge d'affaires, serving as Rapporteur. The Meeting was attended by **14 Member States and 1 observer organisation**. The list of participants is attached to this report as **Annex I**.

Welcome remarks by the Secretary General of the ACS, Ambassador Alfonso Múnera Cavadía

The **Secretary General** thanked the Members for their active participation. He expressed his satisfaction over the achievements made, the tasks undertaken and the objectives and plans to be developed. He underscored the importance of projects such as: the "Map of Maritime Routes" and the "Maritime Port Strategy", to support competitiveness and trade in the Greater Caribbean. He expressed that in the 1920s/1930s the Caribbean had a vibrant shipping business for both people and cargo. The ships sailed between Central America, South America and the Caribbean Airlines. In that way, the Caribbean was not an abstract, but a reality that was lived daily. He lamented that currently there were no means of maritime transport for people and while he praised COPA Airlines and Caribbean Airlines (CAL), they are not sufficient for daily interaction of the peoples of the Caribbean. He stated that it was important for the integrated reconstruction of the Caribbean identity to have daily interaction among its peoples.

Opening remarks and report of the Chairman of the ACS Special Committee on Transport (Cuba), Mr. Pedro Suárez Reyes, which are attached as **Annex II**.

The Chairman said that Cuba was honoured to chair the Special Committee and the Meeting. He indicated that the Committee had had many challenges over the years and that this was a good time to reflect on both the past and the future with a view to uniting the Caribbean by air and sea.

He made several suggestions for the future of the work programme which includes the filtering of the work programme projects to have it consist only of projects that are truly feasible and are of regional interest and for which the financing required for their implementation must be obtained and managed with the least number of conditions for usage. He highlighted and applauded the work done by the ACS Director of Transport, Mr. Eduardo José González Angulo, who has assembled a team of professionals, pooling efforts and achieving the objectives proposed. He also praised the teamwork of the Transport Directorate and the support provided by the Secretariat team and especially that of the Secretary General, Ambassador Alfonso Múnera Cavadía, for his confidence in the performance of the Special Committee on Transport and for his direct involvement in the issues that concern the Region professionally. He exhorted the group to work to have a productive meeting geared towards a really integrated and sustainable Caribbean region.

Remarks by the Director of Transport and Disaster Risk Reduction of the ACS, Mr. Eduardo José González Angulo

The Director underscored the high and distinguished attendance of the Member Countries and thanked them for this, emphasising that it has been the highest participation recorded in the history of the meetings of the SCT, with 14 Member States in attendance, in addition to COCATRAM in the person of its Director, Mr. Otto Noack. The Transport Director thanked the Chairman for his words and underlined the filtering and refining of the project portfolio. He thanked the Countries, the current Secretary General, as well as the outgoing Secretary General, COCATRAM, the Governments of Korea and Turkey for their financial support and highlighted the instructions of the Chairman, the formulation of the Maritime Port Strategy and its multinational team (Cuba, COCATRAM and Panama), the support provided by Suriname and Colombia, having the support of Dr. Claudia Esguerra, Head of International and Regulatory Affairs in Civil Aeronautics in Colombia. He also underscored the communication strategy developed by the Directorate and the work team. Finally, he touched on the achievements made with the nearly-completed SHOCS project, as a result of which a donation of electronic equipment was received for the Directorate of Transport and also that of Disaster Risk Reduction. He further thanked the

Member Countries for their support, especially the Cuban Ambassador, for his support and close involvement.

Cuba stressed the importance of the integration and co-operation of ACS countries, voiced its satisfaction with the sound work environment of the Directorate and offered its ongoing support.

The Secretary General, Ambassador Alfonso Múnera Cavadía, thanked the Cuban Ambassador for his words and also reiterated the need for joint effort among all those involved in order to continue forward. He expressed his high regard for the Director and conveyed his gratitude for his constant support and also for the support of the Advisor, Mathieu Fontanaud and that of the Transport Directorate team.

Trinidad and Tobago also welcomed all the delegates and thanked Director González for his words. It expressed its interest in contributing to uniting the Caribbean by air and sea and called for the creation of greater synergies among the different Special Committees of the ACS, for the purpose of supporting the work of the Association as a whole. The delegate commented that there are communication between countries and they are expected to improve in this two-day's meeting.

Panama reiterated the importance of history and mentioned the efforts toward expanding customs security and cargo transport that are being developed in Panama in the southern area of the Tocumen airport, which represents an important step forward in the area of customs in the Caribbean. It also congratulated the Transport Director and Suriname, the immediate past President of the Committee on the work done.

2. Approval of the Agenda and procedural matters

Panama referred to points X and XI of the Agenda and asked the Executive Board if they had joint projects between the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism and the Special Committee on Transport; as well as between the Special Committee on Trade and the Special Committee on Transport.

In response to Panama's concerns, the **Chairman**, the **Secretary General** and the **Director**, explained that items X and XI on the agenda are geared toward connecting the various Directorates of the Association and developing synergies, thereby having projects and joint activities that would prove beneficial for everyone. They therefore proposed that the wording of items X and XI be changed to read as follows: "Presentation of the initiatives of common interest of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism" and "Presentation of the initiatives of common interest of the Special Committee on Trade".

Similarly, the **Chairman and the Director** explained to **Suriname**, who enquired about the matter concerning: "Tourism Potentialities of the Greater Caribbean" under item XIV. 1. on the annotated agenda, that this was an

initiative presented by Costa Rica under said title and that this issue will be addressed at its due time.

With these amendments, the agenda was approved.

3. Progress report on the Project: “Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean”

The Chairman announced that the project will be presented jointly with the COCATRAM Director, Mr. Otto Noack and proceeded to thank Mr. José Dopeso, Director of Maritime and Port Affairs and Mr. José Rovira of the Panamanian Maritime Authority, for their valuable contribution. He also announced that in the newspapers of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, and also in online newspapers circulated in the Caribbean, there has been extremely positive coverage of the Meeting of the Special Committee on Transport and particularly the projects: “Maps of Maritime Routes” and “Maritime Port Strategy”. The Chairman recalled the implementation and progress of the project. He also reported on the information contained in the programme, access to the web page, the field visits made this year, in Panama to the International Maritime University and to the Crowley Marine Agency, and also in Curacao to the Maritime Authority of Curacao and the Port Authority of Curacao, the VR Shipping N.V. shipping agency, the SEL Maduro and Song Agency and the President of the Curacao Chamber of Commerce, and making the most of his presence in Curacao, he also contacted the Director of the Maritime Authority of Curacao.

In Trinidad and Tobago, he visited the Trinidad Shipping Association, the Port Authority of Trinidad, the Perez y Compañía agencies and the representative of the CMA-CGM line. The Chairman further informed that accolades have been received from all those visited concerning the project and its usefulness, as well as their willingness to continuously contribute from this moment onward.

He reported on the added value of this project, which is offered to exporters, importers, investors and scholars in general on the issue of regional maritime transport and its current characteristics. He also announced that the system designed creates ongoing fortnightly update reports.

The Chairman demonstrated the interactive online Maps of Maritime Routes project, found on the ACS website, by using the example of Trinidad and Tobago, where 16 services shipping lines of regular-sized containers were observed as well as, and the way in which their contact information can be accessed. The report also included information on smaller sized vessels with travel to a smaller number of countries with a smaller number of containers. He later reported that arrangements are currently being made to place direct links to the web pages of the existing companies, this depending on the approval given by the shipping companies. He indicated that the work began with a small

budget but with great motivation and discipline, which made it possible to attain the goals proposed. He once again thanked Otto Noack for his dedication and availability regarding the work carried out on this project, as well as the professionals of COCATRAM and the AMP who constitute the executing team. The Chairman said that based on this project, the Greater Caribbean no longer has the excuse that there is no trading in the Region because there is no maritime transport.

The Chairman gave the floor to **Otto Noack**, who delivered a presentation on COCATRAM and on the main projects and initiatives that it has assumed, which include the "Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean" project, entrusted by the ACS and coordinated by Cuba. The complete presentation is attached as **Annex III**.

The Chairman highlighted that the reality of integration was fully demonstrated in the Maritime Routes Project, as well as the history of the maritime connection and the need for its development. He outlined the benefits expected of the Panama Canal expansion, not only for the Caribbean but for the world as well. Thus, he underscored the possibility and importance of not only considering the establishment of a regional shipping line with freight vessels capable of assimilating the small intraregional shipments, but also organising a regional cabotage system with low tariffs and great intensity, and above all, being prepared in the area of regulations, with the requirements of the IOM.

The Director made reference to the specific activities and informed the meeting of the way in which the additional funds were obtained from the Government of Turkey and their approval by the Ministerial Council, for use in the "Maps of Maritime Routes" project. He also stressed that the project be included on the COCATRAM and ACS web pages, where all the information is compiled. The Director further highlighted the contributions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago and the CARICOM Under-secretary during the Ministerial Council meeting and indicated that co-operation between CARICOM and the ACS is a possibility.

Panama emphasised the importance of the extensive work to expand the Panama Canal that is scheduled for 2014 and that the time has therefore come for the Region to take action. It indicated that Trinidad and Tobago is already working on the expansion of its port and that all the other countries are also expected to do the same. **The Secretary General** expressed his agreement and announced that a communication strategy is lacking in the Region where that is concerned.

Otto Noack of COCATRAM, informed the participants of the reports that can be produced by using the website which was public and free. He also underlined the importance of undertaking the necessary efforts to maintain and update it and to source funds for its financing. He also mentioned that he had presented the project to the World Bank, which had found it interesting and impressive.

Cuba, Suriname, Haiti and El Salvador reiterated their appreciation and congratulations for the work carried out and the practical usefulness of the site, and called for means for financing this project to be considered, in order to keep it alive and in full operation. Cuba also asked about the viability of selling the site to another group, such as the World Bank. The Delegate also emphasised that without the finances for upkeep, the project would be at a standstill.

The Chairman in response, said that it had been brought to his attention that it was a publicity tool and reflected that the shipping companies could be approached to contribute to its upkeep and enlargement. He then issued an appeal to move forward, to improve and develop the tool since, according to the exchanges maintained with organisations like ECLAC, IMO, CSA, partners of international transport, the conclusion was drawn that there is nothing similar to this in the world. He expressed the need to continue with a third phase that would include comments from users and field work experiences and which would seek out channels for financing to sustain this project.

The Director explained that this is a free tool for the use and benefit of the countries. He announced that work will continue on the acquisition of additional resources and further indicated that during the last meeting, there was talk of its reports and that it would be a proud moment to be able to present them to the 5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government carded for next year in Haiti. To this the Chairman responded that he will do his utmost to have them ready in the shortest timeframe possible.

Venezuela and **Suriname** voiced concern over the privacy rights, inviolability and the level of safety of the information sent, in which regard the Chairman stated that this was covered by the use contract that allows the tool to be protected. He also confirmed that sensitive or highly private information cannot be distributed and is protected by the same software.

The Chairman expressed his thanks and made mention of the fact that there is concurrence regarding the thoughts on the tool and the approach for publicising it. He further indicated that first of all, it is necessary to know how to sell it, to whom it will be sold and only then can its selling price be considered.

Haiti expressed its congratulations and applauded the success of this meeting. It enquired as to whether or not it is possible for all Members to participate and use this programme and if this tool can help to develop and create maps for all countries. To this the **Chairman** replied in the affirmative, that this provides information on the different maritime transport services in all countries and that it has been developed to be used by all Members at no cost. The Chairman invited the Haitian delegation to visit the web pages of the ACS or COCATRAM, which contain all information pertaining to the project as well as the contact data of the executing parties, in order to send all related concerns and to request any additional information that may be required.

The Chairman called for interaction, horizontal and transparent dialogue for this great project to move forward.

The Director thanked the executing team for the support given to this grand project and proceeded with the next item on the agenda.

4. Presentation of the Electronic Bulletin

The Director presented the bulletin (see **Annex IV**) and indicated that the idea behind it was to release a bulletin every six (6) months and that there have been two (2) publications thus far, the last of which has improved in several aspects. **The Director** also invited Members to collaborate so that the bulletin could be produced with their information and released with greater frequency.

The Chairman congratulated the Secretariat on the work carried out in fulfilling what was agreed to in previous meetings. He announced that this is an invitation to access the ACS web page, see newsletters and forward any comments. He said that this is a tangible display of what can be achieved with little resources.

5. Report on the promotion of regional commercial co-operation among the airlines whose headquarters is located in the territory of ACS countries

The **Head of Internationals and Regulatory Affairs of Civil Aeronautics of Colombia, Dr. Claudia Esguerra**, indicated that in honouring the commitment from the last Meeting of the Special Committee on Transport, she was presenting the advancements made in the project. The complete presentation is attached as **Annex V**. Dr. Esguerra stressed the importance of developing commercial alliances in order to continue uniting the Caribbean by air, as well as developing air routes and improving connectivity. She stated that the main idea is to build a common policy regarding the authorization of agreements and alliances between airlines. In that regard, it was established that a survey would be circulated, which would be available on the web page.

The Director called for a technical working group to be created for the purpose of developing this matter.

The Chairman and **the Director** applauded the fulfilment of the mandate and confirmed the need to establish a Technical Air Transport Group among the countries desiring as such.

The Colombian Ambassador highlighted the lack of connectivity in the area of transport in both Central and South America, as well as in the Caribbean, and requested that more comprehensive solutions be sought, in which respect he proposed that cargo transport be added.

Dr. Claudia Esguerra delivered her second presentation, which is attached as **Annex VI**, on: "The need to study the possibilities of the demand for air transport among Member countries".

The Chairman thanked Dr. Esguerra for the presentation and reiterated the need for the creation of this technical group, led by Colombia, in which all countries will participate (since it requires the pooling of efforts of all countries), with a work schedule to establish priorities and timelines in the development work..

Jamaica also praised the initiatives presented by Colombia and voiced its concerns, which are attached as Annex VII.

The Chairman congratulated and welcomed the creation of an ad-hoc group comprising Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Panama, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, for the purpose of satisfactorily bringing to fruition the issues addressed.

The Director indicated that once the proposal is received from the Technical Group on the issues and schedule, the Secretariat will circulate it to countries.

6. Report on "The Air Transport Agreement"

The Director read the summary document on the current status of the agreement. He advised that 15 countries had signed and 12 had ratified the Agreement. He also advised of the need to amend the Agreement to make it more applicable to the new realities facing the Region. The Director said that he would further inform the Member States on this suggestion.

The Chairman thanked the Director for his intervention and called for participation from everyone.

7. Progress report on the regional airline and airport quality control system within the implementation of the SHOCS project (by the Special Committee for Disaster Risk Reduction)

The Director of the Disaster Risk Reduction Directorate explained that the SHOCS project is a project that has not only served the Disasters Directorate but the other Directorates as well, particularly the Transport Directorate and indicated that it will be presented in detail at the Meeting of the Special Committee for Disaster Risk Reduction (SCDRR), which will be convened on November 22-23.

The **Advisor of the Transport Directorate, Mr. Mathieu Fontanaud**, then presented the participants with the advancements made on the project. Said presentation is attached as **Annex VIII**.

The Director thanked the Advisor for his presentation and pointed out that in the is project, which was two years old, 21 countries had benefitted directly, particularly the civil aeronautics agencies. He reiterated that the Government of Finland is pleased with the work carried out and indicated that this project has financing in the amount of half a million euros. He further reiterated that the presentation will be delivered in the SCDRR. The project, he said is now in the second stage, which could cost up to 1 million euros.

The Secretary General and the **Chairman** stressed that this is one of the most important projects being carried out in both the Caribbean and the Association, since it focuses on the issue of preparedness in the event of disasters in the Greater Caribbean region, which involve significant human and economic cost for countries. They also acknowledged the efforts undertaken by the work team.

Venezuela asked if this report is directed toward improving the quality of airlines and airports, then why we speak of disasters.

The Director explained that the project is related to DRR in general but it has a transport component, focussing above all on improving the quality of airports and airlines.

8. Clarification of aspects of the agenda for the 2nd day

The Chairman thanked the delegates for their attendance and announced the agenda for the second day.

9. Report on the Project: “Maritime-Port Strategy of the Greater Caribbean”

The Chairman introduced the issue of the Maritime-Port Strategy, considered to be a Caribbean macro-idea (**Annex IX**). The Chairman also announced that this project presentation is consistent with the rules and regulations of the ACS. He applauded the rest of the executing team, namely COCATRAM and the AMP, since Cuba will coordinate and execute this project in the same fashion as that on Maritime Routes. He indicated that the first 2 phases of the project were already completed multinationally (Cuba- COCATRAM- AMP), specifically: presentation of the project and validation of the project. He further informed that these first two phases were already executed thanks to the tremendous combined tripartite effort of their executing parties and cost \$ 8,000 USD. The Chairman stressed that this project falls under the need for a guiding plan of action to be formulated to establish priorities and to better utilise the scarce resources toward raising competitiveness in the context of the expansion of the Panama Canal. He presented the Justification of the project, making reference to point 2.2. of the project concept document. He said that the project responded to the fundamental questions regarding maritime transport competitiveness in

the Caribbean such as (1) what should be done; (2) in what time; and (3) what are the costs. He underscored the importance of container transport, as well as informal transport (TRAMP lines). He also called for the protection of the most precious resource: the Caribbean Sea.

The Director thanked the Chairman for his words and later summarised the advancements achieved.

Cuba analysed the document and asked about the cost of the USD \$ 8000 and if it was a part of the donation that Turkey had made.

The Chairman emphasised the great work carried out with such little resources and offered an explanation on the financing. He explained that the first 2 phases were made possible through south-south co-operation backed by the human resources and professional commitment of their executing parties, ie non-financial input. The mentioned US\$8,000.00 is hence a monetary calculation attached to the efforts and work done by the participants. He also cautioned that another US\$170,000.00 would be needed to complete the project, which currently has COCATRAM as the executor and organisations in Cuba and Panama as the line agencies.

The Director explained numerically Turkey's donation of USD \$ 30,000: \$ 20,000 was allocated for the project "Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean" and the remaining USD \$ 10,000 for "Green Response" and "Urban Green" projects.

El Salvador called for information regarding all collaborators, especially institutions. In that respect, the Chairman explained that precisely therein lies the importance of ongoing inter-meeting information exchange among the participants of each ACS event and also between the participants and the various regional organisations.

The **Secretary General** provided an explanation and clarification, indicating that the observation is not aimed at questioning the costs of the project, but instead, it's a matter of if a project that works without any cost is presented, then its continued functioning in this manner will be pursued. He urged the officials attending these meetings to communicate information to the highest levels, since this has confirmed that there is indeed a communication problem. He also requested that countries make a commitment, since he is of the view that it is easier to access financial institutions like the IDB, the CAF or the World Bank, if governments are contacted first. He stated that projects need to have a communication budget and explained that this is a project which, by its end result, will be linked directly to the Trade Directorate. He made an appeal for Directorates to work together and not in isolation. As regards CARICOM and the OECS, the Secretary General asked about the degree to which integration is being pursued with these organisations and enquired as to the knowledge

possessed by said institutions concerning the projects being developed by the ACS, and he made a further appeal to commit both of these organisations to fulfil one of the ACS mandates on the integration of co-operation organisations.

The Chairman considered the reflection fitting and replied that all information has always been circulated and communicated in accordance with the rules of the ACS. He further mentioned that the communication cost is already provided for in the plan of action.

El Salvador and **Cuba** supported the words of the Secretary General and indicated that it is extremely important to transmit information to everyone and at all levels, especially in the area of Trade.

The Director summarised the efforts undertaken in this regard and stressed that contact points are being followed up with calls being made to each country and to each focal point. In addition, the Director requested that a training and communication component be included in the budget. In response to that, the Vice Chairman, in relation to what was expressed by the Secretary General proposed the inclusion of a communication component in the amount of US\$40,000, bringing the total budget to US\$200,000. The revised version of the project will therefore be circulated and the quest for resources will begin.

Mexico asked for clearer information on the project's financing strategy, the resources with which it will be developed, in order to thereby have elements geared toward involving governments. It also called for consideration to be given to assistance funds from France, Sweden, etc. and in that way, start notifying the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in that regard.

The **Chairman** and **the Director** reiterated that the method of financing hinges on the actions of the Secretariat with potential donors once the execution of the project presented has been circulated and consensus reached on it, although progress has already been made with several embassies.

10. Initiative of common interest of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism

The Tourism Director conveyed her thanks for the invitation to participate in the SCT and presented the specific Multi-Tourism programme concerning connectivity and recalled that the primary objective is to facilitate co-operation and dialogue between the transport sector and the tourism industry. She explained the importance of "Cruise Tourism" that annually generates \$ 18 million USD and the link with air connectivity; which can develop a greater economic impact in the Caribbean. The complete presentation is attached as **Annex X**.

The Chairman thanked the Director for her presentation and in turn offered absolute support to the Tourism Directorate.

11. Initiative of common interest of the Special Committee on Trade

The Director of Trade Development and External Economic Relations focussed the presentation on trade facilitation in the ACS. Among the highlights: promotion of foreign investment, the creation of business visas (meeting to be held in January 2013) and customs harmonization and standardization in the Caribbean. The presentation is attached as **Annex XI**.

The Chairman called for proper interaction between the Special Committee on Transport and the Special Committees on Trade and Sustainable Tourism. He made an appeal for efforts to be joined and synergies developed. He continues to wait for what is developed by the various Special Committees. The Chairman announced that he wants to co-operate and invited the Caribbean region to take part in the joint development of Trade and Transport.

The Director conveyed his thanks for the presentation and proceeded with the next item on the agenda.

12. Presentation of the current status of the project Portfolio of the SCT of the ACS

The Director introduced the Work Programme of the Directorate. He outlined the 3 objectives and the 13 activities in total. He reminded the participants of the importance of filtering the projects, which was done last year. He also requested authorisation to change the name to the project entitled Maritime Port-Strategy in the work programme since it appears there as "development of maritime trade in the Greater Caribbean" as approved last year. The request was unanimously approved and the respective name change will be made in the work programme.

The Chairman highlighted the projects that remain and the process that is continuing respecting the rules and regulations of the ACS. And so it was agreed.

13. Analysis of the execution of the plan of action provided for the period 2012 -2013

The Director called attention to the importance of the next Summit of Heads of State and/or Government that will be held in Haiti and suggested that the draft declaration and plan of action be circulated simultaneously with the Rapporteur's Report.

14. Any other business

The Director and the Chairman offered an explanation on the title given to the Costa Rican initiative during the last Meeting and clarified that this has greater relevance for the area of Tourism, in addition to which, the initiative was not presented in the format required by the ACS, which was already communicated to Costa Rica.

The **Director** invited **Haiti** to present its concerns and suggestions.

Haiti expressed its interest in developing Communication in its country. Its question was aimed at the current need to develop a telecommunications network, especially one using fibre optics, and requested collaboration from the other countries in that respect.

The Chairman indicated that despite it being a matter of prime importance, it deviates from the work expectations and efforts of this Special Committee and he asked that the question be forwarded to the Secretariat.

15. Conclusions

Colombia thanked the Chairman, Directorate and the Secretariat for the excellent conducting of the Meeting.

The Chairman applauded the work done by the Directorate's team and also thanked the entire logistical team, translation team and the Protocol Officer for all their support. He further announced that he has done his utmost and will continue to do so in order to fulfil the mandates and objectives of both the ACS and the Special Committee on Transport. He reiterated that unity in **action** is the best approach possible, for tackling the numerous challenges and trials that arise, safeguarding the interests of the Greater Caribbean region.