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**Speech by the Chairman of the Special Committee on Transport**

Distinguished Delegates:

Once again, Cuba has the honour and great responsibility of serving as Chairman of the SCT of the ACS and it is also pleased to greet and address the distinguished Delegations that are here to attend our annual work meeting.

Permit me to express heartfelt congratulations to the other Members of the Executive Board who are present today.

Also, we are truly honoured to have at our Head Table, the Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States, Ambassador Alfonso Múnera and the Director of the Committee, Mr. Eduardo Gonzalez.

For many years, more than 15 years, this SCT, which we physically constitute today, has encountered numerous challenges and trials and many can still come our way in the future, but I assure you, without a shadow of a doubt and unmistakably, that we will be able to tackle them successfully. As I once said ..... ***we have just enough time to reflect objectively on what we have achieved and how much we are still missing in order to bring to fruition the task entrusted to us from the onset*** ..... "Unite the Caribbean by Air and Sea". We are dedicated to this with absolute passion and it is our objective, our goal.

There continues to be a need for tangible results, in the short term, for strategic, organisational actions that we can take that would continue to increase not only the vitality of the SCT and the ACS, but also the confidence of the Member States and Associate Members in our Committee in the ACS.

Work is underway toward the implementation and in turn, analysis of the regulatory framework and/or operating procedures that govern the performance of the Secretariat and if deemed necessary, the proposed amendments will be submitted for approval (as established), to our highest body, the Ministerial Council, so that this important executive body, with clear recommendations from its Committees, could define its work in them and facilitate with the immediacy required, the implementation of the agreements of the Ministerial Council and those of the various Committees.

Our objectives include:

- Achieve with the ingenuity of all involved and with the support of the Chairmen of the other Committees, the filtering of the ACS project portfolio on which we have been working for more than three years, leaving in it only those projects of regional interest that are feasible.

- Keep the actions of the Secretariat aimed at obtaining financing to execute the projects in the portfolios, obtain financing without conditions or with as few as possible and also achieve major participation from regional experts.
- Each meeting, each exchange should establish agreements, objectives, which should be followed up in a timely fashion and fulfilled. Only in that way will we be able to shift solutions from discourse to reality.
- Continue the effective exchange of communications with the members participating in the meetings of the Committee, so as to keep us animated, integrated and in action.
- Underscore the advancements made in the efforts pooled multi-nationally in the execution of projects and in the scope of common objectives.

And last but by no means least, permit me to acknowledge the hard work done by Director Eduardo González, who is here today and who has assembled a professional work team that is competent and efficient. This team gets results, it organises actions that fulfil agreements and recommendations and keeps us united from one meeting to the other. Even under tough health and human conditions, this Director has spared no personal effort in dedicating himself to the numerous tasks falling under his purview. Thanks Eduardo, my thanks to your team. It is truly an honour to work with all of you.

Another important aspect that is worthy of mention is the fact that since the early moments of his arrival in Port of Spain, Ambassador Múnera contacted me personally and expressed his desire and absolute willingness to contribute to our endeavours. Since then, both of these expressions have become a tangible reality over these months. Ladies and Gentlemen, we have an excellent team at the Secretariat, a team that listens, understands and contributes to the progress made. The floor is ours and so is action.

I invite you to hold a meeting that is based on the existing conditions that have already been described, a meeting of excellence, which would provide guidelines, which would establish attainable objectives, the shorter the timeframes the better, since the need for secure, efficient transport and with direct connections continues to be a pressing one for the peoples of our Greater Caribbean, in order to achieve its true integration and its sustainable development

Much is expected of our discussions, agreements, actions and results. We are proud to be and to act in the present, for now and for the future. Carry on!

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**