**Project: Increased Competitiveness in Tourism Development in the Greater Caribbean through the Implementation of Tourism Sustainability Certification**

As is well known, the economies of many countries in the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), large and small, depend to a large extent on sustainable tourism and this project is aimed at making the concept of sustainability into something real, practical and necessary, in the context of a country’s tourism competitiveness, based on indicators and criteria laid down in the history-making Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STCZ).

Some specific objectives of this project include improvement in competitiveness in tourism destinations in the Region, which will translate into better income; greater innovation in the development of destinations and products; contribute significantly to the mobilisation of resources and can be used as a new marketing tool.

Essential purpose of the Certification is to improve the manner in which natural, economic and social resources are used, while providing incentives for active participation by local communities and at the same time providing new support for competitiveness in the business sector and the various service providers in the sector.

The certification is also a tool which offers differentiated niche markets and represents a substantial improvement in the income and profitability generated by tourism, which today, is becoming more and more sophisticated, and aware of the need to preserve the natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

In summary, tourism, because of its multiplier effect, adds value to international reserves and investments through productive sectors like agriculture, construction, security and exports. Some countries have also achieved major returns through job creation, promotion, culture and the environment and above all increased economic activity, which helps in some way to reduce poverty, one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

***General Objective:*** *Promote competitiveness in tourism destinations in the Greater Caribbean by issuing certificates based on indicators and criteria in the STZC, for opening up new market niches and a differentiated offer, and to make the concept of sustainability a practical, necessary and profitable reality for countries or the region.* ***Destination certificates and tourism sustainability indicators will be used in accordance with the Convention for the Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean.***

***Specific Objectives:***

*• Implement an ad hoc certificate programme in accordance with the criteria and indicators established for the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean – STZC.*

*• Improve competitiveness in tourism destinations in countries of the Greater Caribbean, which translates to better income for receiving communities.*

*• Innovate in the development of destinations and products*

*• Serve as a marketing tool*

*• Contribute to the mobilization of resources*

*• Increase the flow of tourists to certified destinations, which translates to increased income*

*• Training in the implementation of sustainable tourism indicators in the STZC.*