

"IN THE ZONE" a tribute to Tourism Zone of the Caribbean.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to our third edition of *In the ZONE*, a newsletter created by the ACS Directorate of Sustainable Tourism which focuses on Sustainable Tourism initiatives in the Greater Caribbean!

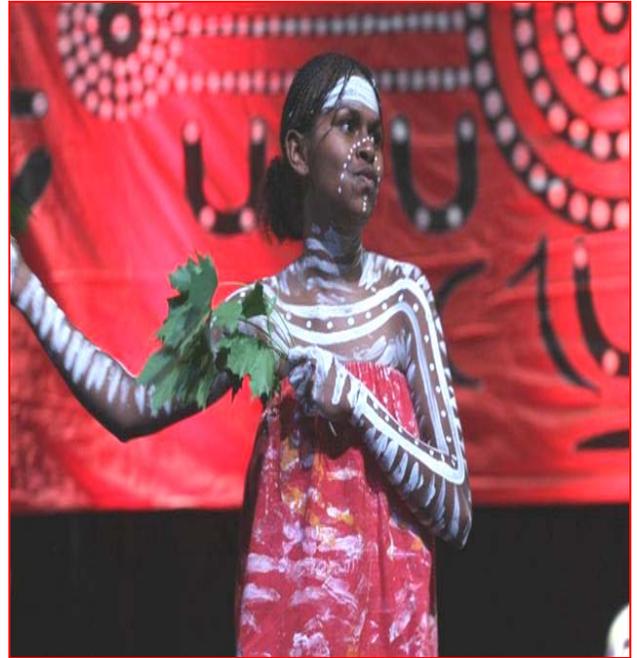
As we celebrate the beginning of a new year, this edition highlights various festivals of the Greater Caribbean, looking not only at the creativity that our carnivals and music festivals showcase, but also at celebrations of nationalism, religion and the environment.

As usual, we would like to thank the members of the various Ministries of Tourism, Embassies and Caribbean Organisations for your contributions for without your articles, this publication certainly would not have been as diverse.

We look forward to receiving further submissions of articles and pictures for our future editions as we continue to showcase the beautiful people, amazing sites and diverse culture of our region.

Wishing you all health, peace and joy for 2012,

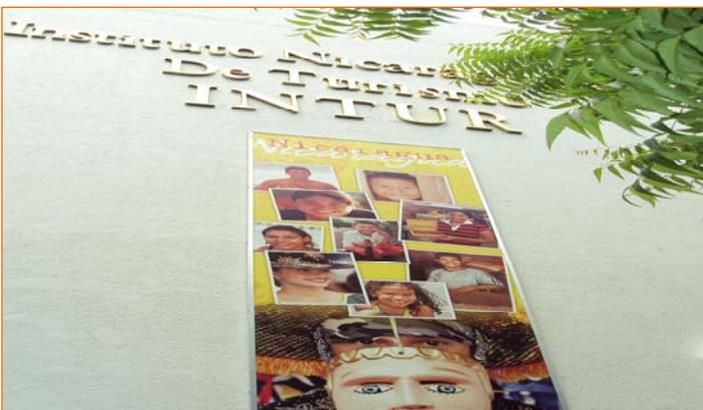
Gloria de Mees,
 ACS Director of Sustainable Tourism



Above: Descendance Performer
Picture provided by: Red Earth Festival Committee

THE ACS DIRECTORATE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM SEMESTER REVIEW

Ministers and Vice Ministers of Tourism, Technical experts and senior tourism officials from Member States of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), gathered in Managua, Nicaragua, June 15th-18th for two high level meetings, held consecutively over the four days. The Meetings were held under the auspices of the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua through its Tourism Institute, in collaboration with the ACS Directorate for Sustainable Tourism (DST). The Meetings received combined participation from 14 Member States: The Bahamas, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, St. Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad, Venezuela and host Nicaragua. Also in attendance was one Founding Observer - the Secretariat for Tourism Integration of Central America (SITCA), and one international and regional partner, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and CARIBSAVE respectively.



Above: INTUR, Mangua, Nicaragua
Picture provided by: Ms. Amanda Charles

The first of these meetings was the **Third Meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group for the establishment of the Association of Caribbean Cruise Ship Destinations (ACCD-WG-3)**, held on June 15th and 16th. The ACCD-WG, comprising tourism officials from the various member states, was formed to advance the concept and framework for the institutionalization of the Association of Caribbean Cruise Ship Destinations (ACCD). This meeting was convened to discuss the progress made since the Second Meeting of the Working Group (ACCD-WG-2) held in La Antigua, Guatemala, September 2nd and 3rd, 2010, and more specifically to review the documents generated from the consultancy to develop the Draft Statutes, the Strategic Operational Plan, Funding Plan and the other formative documents to establish the ACCD.

The meeting analysed the feedback received from ACS Member and Associate Member States on the draft documents, with the aim of finalising these documents, and also made decisions on the next steps to be taken in this process. It was agreed that the ACCD would not be established as a new regional organization, but as an initiative within the parameters of the ACS, albeit with sufficient autonomy so as to include non-ACS member countries and/or territories as well as private sector entities with an interest in cruise tourism in the Greater Caribbean Region.

It was also agreed that there would be one to two follow-up meetings to resolve critical issues related to funding, membership fees, the structure and bodies of the ACCD and their respective functions, and other organizational aspects, in order that the Association can be formally established in a timely manner.



Above: Members of the SCST –22 Head table
Picture provided by: Ms. Amanda Charles

The **Twenty second meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-22)** followed on June 17th and 18th. The SCST comprised of senior Tourism officials from ACS Member and Associate Member States is tasked to support and direct the work program of the DST. Held annually, this meeting was an opportunity to review the advances made with the execution of the Sustainable Tourism Work Program and outline priorities and new strategies within the four programmatic areas, which seek to augment and promote the sustainable development of tourism in the Greater Caribbean Region.

The meeting recognized the leadership of Nicaragua in their role as current chair of the SCST and commended the Director and Team of the DST for their diligence and efficacy. Delegations also expressed their interest and commitment to support the Chair and the DST in the implementation of the various initiatives outlined, to strengthen the tourism agenda. At the meeting's conclusion Nicaragua offered to be the host of the **3rd Meeting of Ministers of Tourism of the Greater Caribbean (TMM-3)**, to be held in the 2012-2013 biennium.

It was also agreed that the **23rd Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-23)** would be held in the second quarter of 2012, preferably in May or June, and that invitations would be circulated to member states to express their interest in hosting said meeting.



Above: Cultural Show, Nicaragua
Picture provided by: Ms. Amanda Charles

UPCOMING DST MEETINGS AND EVENTS

EVENT DESCRIPTION	2012
23 rd Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-23)	May/June (TBD)
4th Fourth meeting of the Ad-hoc Working Group for the Establishment of the Association of Caribbean Cruise Ship Destinations (ACCD-WG-4)	TBD
3 rd Meeting of Ministers of Tourism of the Greater Caribbean (TMM-3)	TBD

Güegüense, Masterpiece of Humanity

A national symbol for Nicaragua, this play is the most complete within the domain of national art, and was declared a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO on 25 November 2005. In terms of drama it signifies, within Latin American theatre, the creation of the first mestizo character with unchanging values. It is a comedy – combining Indigenous and Spanish cultures and also dance and music, possibly written at the start of the 18th century, in Nahuatl and Old Spanish. It is art in its entirety: the Carnavalesque farce of *Güegüense* is a play with music and dance which, without a doubt, makes it a linguistic phenomenon and an essential component of Nicaraguan literature.

The play revolves around the protagonist, after whom this extraordinary play is named, and the thread is lively and picaresque dialogue with 314 stories and 8 songs, bearing the following names: *entrada* (entry), *ronda* (serenada), *corrido* (ballad), *son de la dama* (lady's song), *San Martín*, *son de los machos* (mules' song), *el borracho* (the drunkard) and once again, *el son de la entrada* (entrance song). *Güegüense*, a Nahuatl Word which, translated into Spanish, means old man, is a street-theatre play written in Nicaragua by mestizo and anonymous authors, with a knowledge of Nahuatl and the Spanish of the era, and was obtained in Masaya in 1874 by Herman Berendt, a German national, in documents left by Don Juan Eligio de la Rocha. The play was studied by Daniel Brinton, a North American, and published in volume III of the Brinton Library of Aboriginal American Literature, Philadelphia, in 1883. It was initially published in English and later translated into modern Spanish.

After its publication, *Güegüense* was discussed by distinguished figures such as Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg and Founder of Modernism Rubén Darío, who recommended its study and appreciation, as well as by the Cuban José Martí and the outstanding essayist Pedro Henríquez Ureña.

Güegüense, in addition to its cultural attributes, is also an anthropological, social and historical expression of an extraordinary moment, where a series of figures anonymously converged and expressed life, social integration and the everyday events of that era in the history of Nicaragua.



Above: Güegüense Character
Picture provided by: Ms. G. de Mees

These are its characters: Governor Tastuanes, Chief Alguacil, the Royal Secretary, the Registrar, *Güegüense* and his two sons Ambrosio and Forsico, Lady Suche Malinche, who is the Governor's daughter, the four mules, carrying the riches of the merchant (*Güegüense*): *Macho ratón* or *pequeño*, *macho moto* or orphan, *oaxaqueño* and *mohíno*, a sad and melancholy character.

This play currently takes place in the streets of the city of Diriamba, department of Carazo, during the feast of the Patron Saint San Sebastián on 19 January, lasting until the end of the same month, with folk ballet and local drama troupes taking part. The text of the play has been translated into English, French, Japanese, Italian and modern Spanish.

Güegüense, as a play and Heritage of Humanity, holds significant tourist potential, both for Nicaraguans living in the country who are still unaware of the depth of this play, as well as for foreign visitors who appreciate culture and the arts. This play is worthy of admiration in all of its splendour and extraordinary features and is, without a doubt, the pride of Nicaragua.

SIGHTS AND SITES OF ACS MEMBER STATES: FESTIVALS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Suriname's Owru Yari

Ask any Surinamer what time is best to visit his country and the answer will always be unanimous: year-end. Weather-wise December is a tricky time of the year, but this is the month when this country on the north-eastern shoulder of South America erupts in an all-out celebration that culminates on December 31st and that trumps everything.

Imagine a week of Caribbean Carnival, with parties all around, molded and jam-packed to fit into one day and picture is somewhat clear. Suriname's diaspora travels home from all over the world, just to be part of the *Owru Yari* (Old Year's) party, and to enjoy the almost tangible atmosphere that's thick like smoke in the air.

Old Year's has always had a distinct meaning in this country of 500,000. Here a Chinese tradition of fireworks blended with an Afro-Surinamese tradition of shedding loads of the old year to



Continued below

start fresh in the new one, so loud bangs of firecrackers have always escorted Suriname through the last month of the year. A dash of the Christmas cheer mixed in with the excitement of welcoming a New Year, and what some consider the greatest Old Year's/New Year's celebration was a fact. In the nineties the atmosphere was bottled and packed into "*Surifesta*", a string of events that kick-off around mid-December and lead to the wild, wild parties at the end.

Surifesta also considered those people who want to close off the old and welcome the new a little more conventional and reflective. The Bank of Suriname DSB hosts its annual Christmas concert, as does telecommunications company TeleSur. Afro Surinamese foundation *Krin Konsensi* (Clean Conscience) does its annual cultural *Swit Watra* (sweet water) wash at the Independence Square, where people can come to take a spirit cleansing bath.

Still the two main events are the Kawina Festival on December 30th at Tori Oso café on Fred Derby Street and the *Surifesta Owru Yari Streetparty* on December 31st at the entertainment area near 't Vat terrace and Hotel Torarica. The Kawina Festival 30th features the hottest bands that master the exotic and pulsating rhythms of Kawina – the quintessential Afro-Surinamese music; thousands of people clog the streets surrounding Tori Oso from midday, with main sponsor, Suriname's Parbo Beer factory, supplying endless quantities of its brew. This year *The Generals*, the kawina band whose lyrics and showmanship won first prize at the recent Kawina competition, will be on stage together with the other favorites.

The figurative fireworks that are expected at the Kawina Festival then continue on December 31st , ... albeit now literally. Around midday businesses string hundreds of meters of fireworks alongside Paramaribo's main street – Dominee Street.

This unique *pagara* relay is set off in a loud crescendo of bangs and smoke that slowly crawls over the streets, cheered on by onlookers, as the businesses men say goodbye to the old, and set the stage for the street party at 't Vat, notorious for its fun. Here's where people really let loose.



The party winds down just before midnight, when everybody is rather at home, either in prayer or just to be with family in reflection of the last year, lifting a glass while making resolutions for the new one ahead. At 12.00am sharp, the country explodes; every household lights off a *pagara* at the front door; the bigger, the longer and louder, the better. Tradition then demands that you leave the snippets of red fireworks paper in front of the homes, to show that you have truly blasted the old away. The next morning, New Year's Day January 1st, Suriname slowly crawls from under the heaps and heaps of snippets, ready to take on whatever challenges the New Year has in store.

Article and pictures provided by: Marvin Hokstam

Mr. Hokstam is an award-winning Caribbean journalist. After a long Caribbean career, he writes from his native Suriname, where he runs www.devsur.com, the country's only English medium.

Public Holidays and Festivals of Mexico

The most important celebrations for Mexicans allow relevant events in the history of the country to be remembered, in the long and fruitful process of forming the Mexican Nation, as well as other significant events occurring locally over the past centuries, including those of a religious nature. At the same time, each region has its own festivities during the year and celebrates public holidays almost in the same way throughout the Mexican Republic, and these are even carried out on a large scale in other parts of the world through diplomatic missions and wherever there are well-organized Mexican communities. Mexico is characterized as being a happy and supportive, hospitable and productive country that has created a multicultural range of colourful beliefs with several traditions.

The Main National Holidays

The Adoration of the Magi or Three Wise Men is celebrated every 6 January nationwide. Most Catholic Mexicans celebrate the Epiphany, which is the visit of the Three Wise Men, Melchior, Gaspar and Balthasar, to the Baby Jesus to worship him. In northern Mexico it is the Baby Jesus who brings gifts to boys and girls, replacing Santa Claus.



Right: Candlemas Day Feast

Candlemas Day takes place on February 2 throughout the country. The festival of Candlemas (Day of Purification) ends the cycle of Christmas and recalls the day when Maria took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, 40 days after his birth, to present him and satisfy the rite of purification. The term *Candelaria* originated in the 9th century, when the ceremony of the Blessing of Candles was included.

Flag Day is held on 24 February nationwide. In 1937 President Lázaro Cárdenas established 24 February as Flag Day. The current flag was created by Agustín de Iturbide in 1821 and is called the Flag of the Three Guarantees.

The Battle of Puebla is remembered every 5 May nationwide. May 5 celebrates the 1862 victory of Mexican troops over Napoleon III's French army in Puebla. This holiday is enthusiastically celebrated by Mexicans living abroad, especially in the United States of America, and even, it is said, more than the very celebration of Mexico's Independence from Spain.



Above: Flag Day Ceremony



Above: Day of the Dead Rituals

Independence Day is celebrated on 16 September nationwide. In 1813, the insurgent José María Morelos y Pavón established "Independence Day" in the document "Feelings of a Nation", which commemorated 16 September as the beginning of the liberation and emancipation movement from Spain.

The Day of the Dead is actually a double celebration held on 1 and 2 November nationwide. The Day of the Dead is a Mexican celebration established before the arrival of the Spaniards. It is of indigenous origin and honours the dead during November 1 and 2, remembering children and the lives of deceased relatives, respectively. This gives rise to a rich variety of celebrations throughout the entire country. These dates coincide with the Catholic festivities of the Day of the Faithful Departed and All Saints. These are evocative and joyous festivals. This celebration happens throughout Central America and the United States. UNESCO has given this celebration the status of a World Heritage Festival.

The Day of the Mexican Revolution is held on 20 November nationwide. The Mexican Revolution was the first social transformation of the 20th century in the world and consisted of a series of struggles and uprisings between 1910 and 1920, with the aim of establishing a democratic social and political system and no re-election. The Revolution would officially end with the enacting of the new Constitution of 1917.

The Festival of the Virgin of Guadalupe takes place on 12 December each year nationwide. The Virgin of Guadalupe is honoured on December 12. This is the Virgin that appeared in 1531 to Saint Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac, Valle de Mexico, where Mexicans worshipped Tonantzin, mother of the deities. The centre of celebrations today is the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City, where millions of pilgrims go every year, making it the most important religious site in the Americas.



Above: Mexican Revolution Day Celebrations

Posadas (Processions) celebrations take place from 16 to 24 December nationwide. In colonial times, the Augustine monks depicted the journey of Mary and Joseph to Nazareth, during the 9 days before 25 December, in order to teach the Indians about the new religion. The 9 days symbolize the 9 months of Maria's pregnancy and also coincided with the days on which the Aztecs celebrated the birth of Huitzilopochtli. It is believed that the tradition of bursting the piñata came from the Chinese practice of breaking figures filled with seeds to herald a good agricultural season. Marco Polo would take this custom to Europe. Spanish missionaries brought piñatas to New Spain and gave them a religious significance.

Christmas Day is practically a global date that is celebrated on 25 December nationwide. This festival dates back to the early years of the Christian church, when Pope Telésforo established it in the 2nd century. In Mexico Christmas celebrations, *posadas*, *pastorelas* (shepherds' plays) and nativity scenes are traditions that were inherited from the Spaniards since the era of colonization.

Article and Pictures provided by: Advisory Unit, Ministry of Tourism, Mexico

Patron Saint Days in El Salvador



Above: Desfile del Correo Parade

A long-lasting tradition in El Salvador is the Patron Saint's Day in different towns. Each municipality, city, town or village in Central America celebrates the Patron Saint of the area. Dedication for each town by a specific saint was part of the evangelization carried out by the Roman Catholic Church on the American continent during the conquest, thus continuing a tradition that already existed in the Catholic countries of Europe, where patron saints protected the cities.

The fact that each city and town in El Salvador has its "Patron Saint" means that there is a celebration every week in the year and there may even be celebrations in several towns at once. These celebrations revolve around the saint of the city and, in some cases, extend to the entire country. Such is the case of the "Divine Saviour of the World", Patron Saint of San Salvador, the country's capital, but also of El Salvador. Similarly, it happens in other towns such as Antigua Cuscatlán, south of San Salvador, where the Patron Saint's Day is celebrated on December 28 and is dedicated to the Holy Innocents that were executed at Herod's command, since he wanted to kill the Baby Jesus.

Some towns stand out more than others in their Patron Saint Day's festivities, either because of the religious fervour attributed to it by their inhabitants or for some other cultural-artistic aspect that has developed in particular, such as, for example, the location of a town in a historical, artistic-artisanal or productive area, as perhaps the production of sugar cane or coffee, among others. The parish priest and mayor are usually responsible for organizing these festivals, although some other religious, civil or cultural figure may stand out and take charge of the celebrations.

Dances are organized in some areas, as well as cultural and religious events. These dances were another cultural legacy from Spanish colonization and they represent facets of Spanish culture that are now part of the Salvadoran cultural heritage, combining with traditions of the indigenous peoples of the region. For example, the "Old Men of August" represent characters from Christian and Cuscatlec mythology. There is the devil, "Siguanaba" (appears as a woman, a character who punishes dissolute men) and "Cipitio" (Siguanaba's son), among others, who represent important characters for Salvadorans. These characters may wear very elaborate costumes with elements peculiar to each character, such as horns for the devil or the prominent breasts of Siguanaba.

Other productions date back to the Pre-Colombian era, such as the Dance of the Tiger (or the jaguar) and the Deer, which captures the moment when those animals are hunted, enhancing it with artistic nuances. There is also the Dance of the Cow and the Buzzard (a lesser species of vulture), the one between the Mountain Pig and the Tiger, etc. These dances mainly take place in areas where there is still a strong indigenous cultural influence or where the Government (local or central) has supported and promoted them.

Recognized as the most important Patron Saint's Day in El Salvador, celebrations in honour of the "Divine Saviour of the World" also known as the "August Festival" last one week and there are many religious, sporting and cultural activities. They begin on August 1 with the traditional parade "Desfile del Correo", where the character of the ancient herald is recreated who goes about informing citizens that patron saint day activities are starting. This parade is led by the City's Mayor, accompanied by prominent figures from various sectors of the city and country, including businessmen and military leaders. Each sector decorates two floats and the "queen" of that sector rides in one of them, usually a young girl chosen for her physical attributes and congeniality. On the following day, August 2, the parade centres on floats from the trade sector, which is why it is known as the "Desfile del Comercio". The main event takes place on August 5, a national holiday, when the image of the "Divine Saviour of the World" is carried in a procession from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the Metropolitan Cathedral. This event is known as the descent or "la bajada". On August 6, celebrations end with a solemn mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral.

In Santa Ana, the coffee and ranching capital of El Salvador and the second largest city in the country, they celebrate the "Fiestas Julias" from June 17-26 in honour of Our Lady Santa Ana, Patron Saint of the city, after whom the city is named. The Julias celebrations encompass several cultural and religious activities, in particular the fairs highlighting cattle, sweets and handicraft, and end on July 26 with a procession of the image of Our Lady of Santa Ana through the city's streets.

To the east of El Salvador, the "Carnaval de San Miguel" is celebrated each November in honour of the Patron Saint of the city, the Virgin of Peace, whose feast day is November 21. All month long carnivals are organized in each neighbourhood and residential area in the city with dances and bands and on the 21st the image of the Virgin is carried in a procession along the main streets of the city. The main festival, with the largest parade of floats, music and dancing, takes place the last Saturday of the month and today it is considered the "happiest night in Central America".

Below: Carnaval de San Miguel



Above: Parade of the Fiestas Julias

The calendar of patron saint days in El Salvador covers more than 80 celebrations throughout the country, which guarantees locals and tourists alike the chance to enjoy these traditions replete with Salvadoran folklore all year long. As the verse says, taken from a song traditionally sung during the San Miguel Carnival: "Neither poor nor rich, neither young nor old, neither pretty nor ugly, nor light-skinned nor dark-skinned, neither male nor female, neither tall nor short, all are equal in San Miguel, for Carnival". The same can be said for the patron saint days in El Salvador!

For more information on tourism in El Salvador, please visit www.elsalvador.travel

A First Ever Caribbean Carnival Championship: Food For Thought

By virtue of its historical development, it can be argued that Carnival is the World's only event which is totally free of discrimination of any kind.

Carnival is the World's presentation of total inclusion as a true global village with people of all ages, races, gender, class and wealth coming together at one event, creating an equality amongst fellow beings without any hindrance or inhibitions. It can include anything one wants to project from practical, philosophical, social and creative aspects. Growing in its popularity and strength over the years, this style of Carnival can presently be found in various parts of the world via our Caribbean Diaspora.

Carnival, Caribbean Style, is a most cohesive medium and can be used to create a wider collaborative and understandable association. While this practicing and vibrant culture is celebrated in various styles and with slightly different names, there is one common interest and benefit which is the celebration of a cultural pluralism amongst its participants.



***Above: Trinidadian Soca Icon Machel Montano
Picture provided by: Ms. Tamara Ammon***

Currently, the World's largest event, the FIFA World Cup, is a competition that takes place in different regions of the globe in which national football (also known as soccer) teams qualify for the right to represent their country at the finals once in every four years. It is envisaged that, similar to the FIFA event, the establishment of a Caribbean Carnival Championship will give the winners of various Carnival competitions across the Region the right to defend their title amongst their peers. Further uniting the people of the Greater Caribbean in more ways than we can imagine, and at the same time creating a new kind of Caribbean patriotism which only exists to some level at present through West Indies Cricket, the Caribbean Carnival Championships will allow for the fusion of synergies and the creation of a truly collaborative celebration of Caribbean culture.

In addition to the socio-cultural benefits outlined above, the economic benefits of carnival is another area which can be addressed. This area is so wide and intangible that undertaking a comprehensive study on it can be time-consuming and over-whelming. Some of the main sectors and businesses that stand to benefit economically from a Regional competition as proposed are as follows: -

- Food and Beverage Industry
- Transportation Industry (Land, Sea and Air)
- Hospitality and Tourism Industry
- The Craft Industry and Souvenirs
- Textile Industry
- Media and Telecommunications
- Cosmetology
- Printing and Packaging
- The Music and Recording Industry

Also recognizing the need for dialogue to facilitate the sharing of ideas and the documentation of practices as the constantly changing nature of cultural manifestations mandate, it is proposed that a Caribbean Carnival Conference be convened. This Conference will further strengthen the initiative of the Caribbean Carnival Championship allowing for by-in from various Caribbean and International Organisations while allowing for the identification of sources of funding and the fine-tuning of the logistics involved in staging the event.

The success of The First Ever Caribbean Carnival Championship will depend on the level of support by both private and public interests. In doing so, it must be stressed that the staging of this event will benefit the entire Greater Caribbean Region and beyond.

The Red Earth Festival is an eco-arts festival that takes place in some of the most beautiful green spaces in Trinidad and Tobago – in an effort to get families and young people out into the open to appreciate all that the natural environment has to offer and to inspire them to preserve it. The Festival has previously been held at breathtaking sites like the Bamboo Cathedral and the Cuesa dry river bed in Chaguaramas, on Trinidad's North West peninsula, with boat trips to off-shore islands like Chacachacare for beach cleans-ups.

In 2011, in partnership with the local community council, the Red Earth Festival was staged in the quiet fishing village of Blanchisseuse, on Trinidad's North coast, with its rugged coastline, forests, waterfalls and rivers.

With a mission to encourage environmental awareness through the arts and other outdoor events, festival activities included stargazing, nature walks, beach clean-ups, walking tours of medicinal plants, survival training in the bush with the Defense Force, clay sculpting workshops, indigenous rituals to nature with representatives of the local indigenous community and unplugged music performances. Most activities were free and family-friendly.



Above: Children at the Clay Workshop



The move to Blanchisseuse saw the inclusion of two activities that the local community could take ownership of. The first: a seafood festival on the Marianne Beach, with a host of mouth-watering and fast disappearing local specialties like Pacro Water (said to enhance men's sexual performance) and the second: turtle watching. The Blanchisseuse coast is one of the few areas that the endangered giant leather back turtles still come to lay their eggs between May and August and the Government is training local residents as honorary game wardens, to manage the turtle-watching activities in Blanchisseuse. Also added to the calendar of events was the hair-raising boat ride with local fishermen to Paria Bay, a secluded stretch of golden sand, with the clear crystal waters of the Paria river just behind and a short walk to a beautiful waterfall and natural pool.



Above: Views of Blanchisseuse and Paria Bay, Trinidad respectively

But it's not all fun and games. The serious message behind the Red Earth Festival, including its 2011 theme of 'Red Earth – Running Water...' is that the Caribbean's land, rivers and streams (a vital source of fresh water) are being polluted and degraded, and that we can all do something about it. Indeed, the trip to Paria Bay was actually a beach and river clean-up to remove the plastic, styrofoam and other waste left behind by the uninformed. Red Earth's challenge is to reach everyone with its message of environmental protection and to transform people from polluters to protectors.

Supporting Community Development and Sustainable Development

The Red Earth Festival is organized by the non-profit organization Red Earth, which seeks to work in partnership with corporations, NGOs, the Government and, most importantly, local communities and schools, with the long-term goal of developing and strengthening employment opportunities through the Festival, preserving the local environment and leaving behind a legacy of environmental stewardship.

A Sneak Peek of Upcoming IN THE ZONE Issues

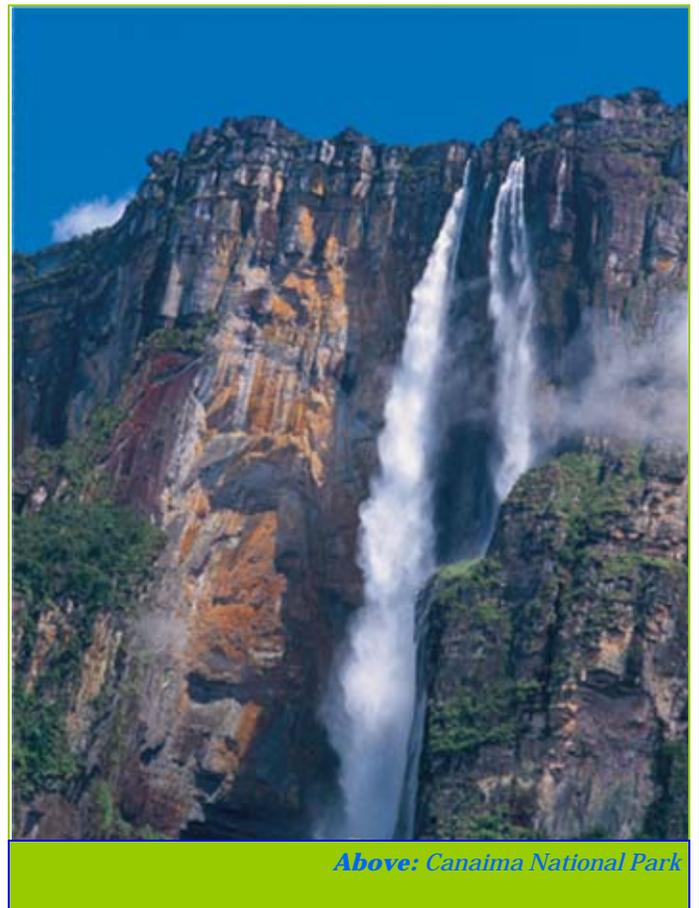
Recognising that culture encompasses all aspects of life, the DST thought it favourable to focus on creating thematic issues of In the Zone which will highlight the diverse culture of the Greater Caribbean. In this issue, focus was given to Festivals of the region and future publications will cover such topics as food, dress, dance, architecture, sites and attractions, all with a view of promoting the region's sustainable tourism practices and products. It is the DST's vision that In the Zone will permit a tangible appreciation of the bond that is shared amongst ACS Member and Associate Member States. Allowing for a greater depth of information sharing, the newsletter can be distributed to schools, hotels, travel agencies and various other tourism-focussed businesses, thereby promoting the cultures of the Greater Caribbean and essentially the collaborative spirit that is the ACS.

Below is an introductory article for the Sites and Attractions issue and features Venezuela's Canaima National Park as a sustainable tourism site with its picturesque views that demand attention.

The Canaima National Park, established on 12th June 1962, is one of the most internationally recognized national parks in Venezuela, due to its fascinating natural spaces, unique worldwide, occupying more than 3 million hectares. Located on the impressive Guyanese Shield, its diverse scenery and large rock formations and *tepuyes* (table mountain formations) merge with its dense and impenetrable rainforest.

The main economic activity for this area within Venezuela is tourism, due to the wide range of recreational activities available, such as: visit to Roraima, outings, excursions to caves and waterfalls such as *Kavak*, *Sapo* and *Kerepacupay Vena* better known as the Angel Falls (the highest waterfall in the world, 979 metres high, located west of the Canaima National Park).

The Bolivarian Government therefore offers the local and international traveller the "Canaima Camp", the largest accommodation within the National Park, with 109 attractive cabins, restaurants, salons, craft shops, as well as personalized programmes and packages, the best option when getting familiar with this extraordinary tourist destination.



Above: Canaima National Park

Article and pictures provided by: The Tourism Board of Venezuela (MINTUR)

GENERAL INFO

What is the SCST?

The Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST) is a technical body meant to assist in the performance of the Ministerial Council. It brings together the representatives of the Members States to discuss issues and projects related to sustainable development of tourism in the Greater Caribbean.

January 2012



Trafalgar River, The Commonwealth of Dominica

Picture provided by:
Ms. Tamara Ammon

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February 2012



Picturesque view of Antigua

Picture provided by:
Ms. Tamara Ammon

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March 2012



BBC Beach, St George's, Grenada

Picture provided by:
Ms. Tamara Ammon

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The Executive Board of the SCST

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Contribute :

The DST invites you to send your pictures and articles in for the April 2011 issue of "IN THE ZONE".

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"IN THE ZONE", is conceived to increase interaction and the level of cooperation among ACS member states and International and regional organizations as well as observer countries. It features destinations, events and activities in ACS Member States as well as from our partners.