

**REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR RODRIGO VIELMANN, VICE-MINISTER OF
EXTERNAL RELATIONS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE
25TH MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

Antigua Guatemala, 23 May 2014

Your Excellency, Ambassador Alfonso Múnera Cavadía, Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States,

Honourable Mrs Karine Roy-Camille, Chair of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism,

Mr. Julio Eduardo Orozco, Director of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States

Mr. Pedro Pablo Duchez, Director of the Guatemalan Institute of Tourism,

Distinguished representatives of the Member States and Associate members of the Association of Caribbean States, invited guests and friends of the ACS,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

On behalf of Ambassador Fernando Carrera Castro, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Guatemala and Chairman of the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States, I have the honour of addressing you, and of extending a very warm welcome to our country on the occasion of the opening of the 24th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism.

The Government of Guatemala is pleased that the city of Antigua, Guatemala, a World Heritage site, is hosting this meeting. The special characteristics of this historical city and its environs provide a very suitable framework for holding the deliberations of this important gathering.

Our thanks to Ambassador Alfonso Múnera, Secretary General of the Association of

Caribbean States and the staff of the Secretariat for the invaluable support which has made it possible to organize this meeting today.

We are aware of the importance of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean to our region, as a tool for development, which in turn includes an integrated approach to the environment, cultural and social values.

Co-operation between our states and the exchange of experiences is essential for strengthening any actions we undertake, but we are certain that what is most important is unity among our peoples in order to achieve consensus in the decisions and actions towards achieving sustainability in this important activity. For this reason, we are very enthusiastic about the work to be done by the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism in the coming days.

We observe with great interest the issue of intra-regional tourism, which has already been discussed within the Association, specifically during the analyses conducted by the Sustainable Tourism Directorate, which refers to significant growth in recent years. This can offer us different destination modalities without abandoning traditional destinations, deepen multi-destination tourism and reduce excessive dependence on external source markets.

We believe that each of the representatives of the ACS Member States and Associate Members will share practices and experiences arising out of the implementation of sustainable tourism in their own countries, as well as the economic and social impact that such practices have had on each State's development, thus enriching the discussion.

As I conclude, allow me to reiterate our warmest welcome to each of our friends present, and to wish you a very pleasant stay in Guatemala.

Thank you