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**SPEECH DELIVERED BY PEDRO PABLO DUCHEZ
ANTIGUA GUATEMALA, 22 MAY
ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES MEETING AND
WORKSHOP**

- Honourable Karine Roy-Camille, Chairman of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism
- Your Excellency Ambassador Alfonso David Múnera Cavadía, Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States
- Mr. Julio Eduardo Orozco Pérez, Director of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States
- Representatives of public and private organizations participating in today's event
- Friends from the media (if there are any present)
- Friends all

It is an honour for Guatemala to receive such distinguished guests and friends from the Greater Caribbean region to conduct these two days of intense work in this country, the outcome of which we hope will become a reference for the world on best practices in sustainable tourism, and we also hope that it will help to strengthen the region.

I wish to thank the Association of Caribbean States for the confidence placed in our country for the organization and hosting of this event. We are very pleased to be good hosts, and I now invite you, if you have not yet done so, to take a walk through the



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streets of my beautiful country of Guatemala, through the charming Colonial Town, where you can no doubt learn some Life Lessons.

According to the World Tourism Organization, the sustainable development of tourism requires conscious and informed participation by all of us, as well as firm political leadership to achieve broad collaboration and consensus. This is exactly what we will be doing here today.

I am very pleased to know that we will be meeting today around the table to share the best practices in sustainable tourism in our countries, so that based on the lessons learned in each of the destinations, we can work together to design tourism products that generate a high level of tourist satisfaction and become a significant experience for them, making them more aware of the importance of sustainability, and encouraging them to be part of these best practices, in other words, to learn Life Lessons.

As host country, it will be a pleasure to share with you one of our most recent and complete tourism ventures – Maya Trek. This tourism product was designed with a strong focus on environmental sustainability, but above all, with the close involvement of communities that will give it life, and receive first hand the economic and social impact of this project.

Today we are observing Guatemala's 2012-2022 National Sustainable Development Policy, which highlights sustainable development as a real option for economic and



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social development. According to this focus, destinations can effectively help to create decent Jobs and productive occupations, protect the environment and cultural heritage, as well as strengthen national identity, something that makes us Guatemalans proud.

Our Mayan ancestors already expressed this idea centuries ago. Nature demands our deep respect and the pursuit of harmony in our daily interactions with the resources that the earth provides. Taking into account and caring for the natural wealth provided in our destinations will bear lasting fruit that we will enjoy for generations, and this will also translate into more and more tourist arrivals.

We are aware that we still have a long way to go but we also know that we can do it. The road gets easier when we walk with a friend, and today we feel more confident because we are walking with you our friends from the Association of Caribbean States. Together as a block we can continue to make history and share with many other travellers our vision of a more human and responsible tourism that will help to make our world a better place to live.

Once again, I welcome you all to Guatemala, the heart of the *Mundo Maya*.

Thank you.