

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

23RD MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND 1ST PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE 3RD MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TOURISM OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN (TMM-3) Managua, Nicaragua, June 28th - 29th, 2012

DRAFT RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

The 23rd Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) was held in Managua, Nicaragua, on June 28th and 29th, 2012. The meeting was chaired by Honourable Minister Mario Salinas, Minister of Tourism of the Nicaraguan Institute for Tourism and Chairman of the ACS Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST). Also seated at the head table were Honourable Valdrack Jaentschke, Vice Minister and Secretary for External Cooperation, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Nicaragua, Her Excellency María Alejandra Ávila, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Republic of Nicaragua, as Vice-president of the SCST, and Mr. Shefferon Kartowikromo, Second Secretary, Embassy of Suriname in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as Rapporteur. The Republic of Suriname was also represented by the Ministry of Tourism Sector Expert, Mr. Bradley Fraser who due to flight delays arrived on the second day of the meeting. The ACS Secretariat was represented at the head table by the Director for Sustainable Tourism (DST), Ms. Gloria de Mees.

Thirty (30) delegates were in attendance at the meeting. These included representatives from ten (10) Member States, as well as the two Founding Observers: Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat (SITCA for its acronym in Spanish) and the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO), and one International Organisation: the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The complete list of participants is attached to this Report as **Annex A**.

I. Opening Ceremony

In his welcoming remarks, **Minister Salinas** extended greetings all the participants to Nicaragua reiterating the commitment of the Republic of Nicaragua in its role as Chair of the SCST, to promote co-operation in the area of tourism and the productive development of the various sub-sectors. The Chair made mention of the Republic of Nicaragua being entrusted with the SCST Chairmanship at the 17th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council for the 2012-2013 period, indicating that the focus of the Chairmanship would be to continue fostering actions towards integration, solidarity and communication among ACS Member and Associate Member States to increase the benefits and economic potential of tourism to national economies and the region. The Chair in summarising, acknowledged the different initiatives that comprised the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme (STWP) of the ACS indicating that the aim in the immediate term was to achieve consensus on the way forward and execute actions for the attainment of concrete results in the programmatic areas.

In addressing the meeting, **Director de Mees**, conveyed the greetings and best wishes for successful deliberations from the Secretary General of the ACS, adding that the vision of the Association's new administration was to strengthen the Association's role as a platform facilitating regional dialogue, cooperation and

concerted efforts in areas of common interest. The Director further extended gratitude to the Government and people of Nicaragua for their hospitality and acknowledged the efficiency and high level of professionalism of Minister Salinas and his team at the Nicaraguan Tourism Institute, commending them for the support and excellent coordination which were instrumental in the success of the meeting. The Director also thanked the delegates for their participation and in acknowledging the presence of the founding observers CTO and SICA expressed her appreciation for their continued support and co-operation.

The Director continued that aligned to the objectives of the ACS to foster cooperation and dialogue in the area of sustainable tourism, the Directorate for Sustainable Tourism (DST) would be presenting concrete proposals for consideration by the meeting, to advance the work areas of the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme (STWP). She expressed that progress as it relates to the STWP required the active participation and involvement of the Region's public and private sector. In this regard, an appeal was made to the Member and Associate Member States present indicating that their leadership or championing of each initiative was necessary to ensure the effectiveness, sustainability and success of these interventions.

II. Approval of the Agenda and Procedural Matters

The Meeting considered the Draft Agenda as presented by the Secretariat, and addressed other procedural matters regarding its deliberations. There were no amendments at that time and the Agenda was approved.

III. Report of the Chairman on the proposed Work Plan for the 2012 fiscal year

The **Chairman** presented his considerations for the advancement of the Work Programme of the ACS Sustainable Tourism Directorate (STWP). Addressing the meeting, the Chair highlighted the fact that the Republic of Nicaragua had been awarded the Chairmanship of the SCST for the second consecutive term at the 17th Ministerial Council Meeting in February, 2012.

The priorities outlined by the Chair on the proposed Work Plan for the 2012 fiscal year were as follows:

- Facilitate the signing and ratification of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC), through the creation of an Ad-Hoc Working Group to expedite its entry into force.
- Explore the strengthening of the STZC through alignment with indicators that measure tourism competitiveness.
- Promote co-operation and dialogue in the area of cruise tourism and consider the next steps for the establishment of the Association of Caribbean Cruise ship Destinations (ACCD).
- Seek to realise the hosting of a Tourism Fair of the Greater Caribbean.
- Support the establishment of the Centre for the Promotion of Languages and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean (CPLC) and in tandem begin the process for the exchange of students.
- In the area of culture, promote the Region's Indigenous and African cultural heritage.
- Facilitate dialogue in the area of tourism safety and security within the realm of the Regional Tourism Safety and Security Network (RTSSN).

- Promote cooperation with regional organisations such as CARICOM, CTO and other organisations, and facilitate closer co-ordination between the ACS Sustainable Tourism Directorate and the Secretariat of Central American Tourism Integration (SITCA) given Nicaragua's upcoming role as Chair of SITCA.

IV. Report of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism on the Status of the ACS Sustainable Tourism Work Programme

Director de Mees gave an overview of the presentation indicating that she would present a brief report on the activities of the Sustainable Tourism Directorate since its 22nd Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism Meeting, including the status of the 2012-2013 ACS Sustainable Tourism Work Programme approved at that meeting. An indication of the executive board of the SCST was given offering congratulations and commendations to the countries for their leadership and support, to include the Republic of Nicaragua as Chair, the Regional Council of Martinique and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as Vice Chairs and the Republic of Suriname as Rapporteur. The advancements as it relates to the execution of the STWP 2012-2013 were then highlighted in each programmatic area. The Director further reiterated that as a strategic approach to advance the STWP, it was vital that Member and Associate Member States intensify their engagement in the projects and activities of the Directorate. In a further appeal for countries to take a leading and more active role in the implementation of the various initiatives as part of the work programme, she highlighted that this was extremely important in order to fulfil the mandates of the Chair as well as those received from the Ministerial council.

In response to the presentation of the Secretariat, various delegations offered congratulations and expressed support for the advancement of the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme. The representative of the **Republic of Haiti** in addressing the meeting made the following recommendations:

- In the area of Tourism Safety and Security, suggested that the ACS could establish a training mechanism or team that could visit each country as was done in the project to develop the STZC Tourism Indicators.
- In the area of institutionalisation of the Greater Caribbean Tourism Fair, endorsed the importance of having a specific space in major international fairs where the representatives of ACS Member countries can jointly promote their products and countries.
- As it relates to initiatives focussing on languages and cultures and considering the importance of the CPLC in facilitating language learning and cultural understanding, a consultation was proposed between the DST and Panama for a financial needs assessment in order to subsequently inform Member States regarding the contributions needed towards the realisation of the CPLC.
- Also voiced was support for the proposed Caribbean Carnival Competition and the initiative to promote the film industry, highlighting their significance from a cultural integration stand point.
- The delegate recalled the importance of Food Security and requested that the ACS consider the previous proposal of Haiti focussing on Food Sovereignty in that manner to focus on local production which can contribute to reducing unemployment rates, reverse the increasing migration from rural to urban areas and promote and encourage farming as a viable economic activity.

- In the area of natural disasters, requested the establishment of a mechanism to promptly intervene and help victims of natural disasters.
- On the topic of the ACCD, the importance of promoting multi-destination tourism was highlighted and it was recommended that it be considered to have the ACCD become the fifth area of the STWP.
- The creation of a link to the website of the STZC with the websites of the Ministries of Tourism of the ACS Member Countries was proposed in order to facilitate access to tourism information on the countries of the region for travel agents and other intermediaries
- Lastly, it was proposed to establish an annual football championship competition amongst the ACS Member and Associate Member countries to enhance interaction and foster closer relations.

The representative of the **Republic of Colombia** offered their cooperation to Haiti and suggested the formation of a horizontal cooperation plan that could facilitate the exchange of best practises and capacity building between countries. This was agreed by the representative of the **Republic of Honduras** who further recommended the development of an Action Plan for cooperation between the ACS and SITCA in order to achieve concrete results and define a route to be followed by the member states. Various delegations including the SCST Chair commended the representative of Haiti for his contribution.

The representative of the **Republic of Suriname** in addressing the meeting reiterated this country's interest in convening the Inaugural Safety and Security Workshop.

The representative of **SITCA** in commending the efforts of the Directorate expressed the willingness to share the tools and training programs that have been developed within their respective focal areas. The **CTO** representative offered congratulations on the work programme indicating that all of the issues identified were also important to the CTO member countries and expressed support to formalise closer linkages with complementary initiatives within their portfolio.

It was agreed that an Agenda and Action Plan for cooperation between ACS, CTO and SITCA would be developed, which will inform and direct cooperation among the three regional Agencies, and simultaneously define a joint coordinated engagement route with the Member States to achieve concrete results in priority areas for intervention. In this regard, a meeting was proposed between the Secretariats of these institutions to outline the next steps and draw up a definitive Plan of Action for the meetings consideration. It was further outlined that ACS Member and Associate Member States may either champion the initiatives that develop from the group or could submit proposals to strengthen the priorities outlined.

On an institutional level, it was suggested that the ACS facilitate the development of a horizontal cooperation plan that can facilitate the exchange of best practises and capacity building among countries.

Director de Mees in response voiced the commitment of the ACS to explore the recommendations, aware of the multi-dimensional nature of the tourism industry. The Director advised that with regard to the Greater Caribbean Tourism Fair with the leadership of the SCST Chair, the Directorate had been in consultations with the Government of Venezuela and had secured an invitation for the ACS Member States and the Secretariat to participate in the event. She informed that the modalities for the participation of the Greater Caribbean Countries, once received would be circulated.

V. **Presentation and discussion on the advances and way forward concerning the ACCD**

The representative of the **CTO** delivered a presentation on the current state of cruise tourism in their Membership, which entailed information of 2012 Cruise Tourism Travel trends, needs and gaps to maximise opportunities of the sector and interventions of the CTO to strengthen the regions tourism industry inclusive of the Cruise Sector. Providing recommendations for strategies still needed as it relates to the strengthening the sector, the representative made mention of the need to continue capacity-building and training at the local and service level, to promote duty-free shopping and development of indigenous products to encourage visitor spend, and for proper port and visitor facilities. It was also suggested that the revitalisation of a virtual business to business market place previously hosted by the CTO can be explored. As it relates to minimising the negative impacts of cruise tourism, it was suggested that destination carrying-capacity studies could be developed, and co-operation encouraged among the Regions destinations to ensure the generation of mutual benefits.

The representative of **SITCA** in her presentation on the state of cruise tourism in Central America highlighted the composition of the Central American Tourism Council (CCT for its acronym in Spanish) and its objectives and mandates to promote sustainable tourism and tourism integration, which includes mitigating negative impacts of tourism and the formulation of policies and strategies to support sustainable development, socio-economic development and growth. The presentation entailed a report of tourism and cruise tourism statistics, showcasing best practises in the area of sustainable tourism and regional and national initiatives to support and grow the industry in Central America. As it relates to priority areas and interventions the following initiatives were highlighted: tourism safety and security, social impacts such as the involvement of young women and initiatives to reduce incidences of child exploitation, development of rural tourism, support for the development of micro, small and medium enterprises, climate change mitigation and adaptation, collating and managing tourism statistics, promoting multi-destination tourism while also developing countries individual capacities, and developing the Mayan world. Reiterated was an interest and commitment to collaborate with the ACS and CTO and share the knowledge and best practises based on the experiences of the Central American countries in this regard.

The Deputy Minister of Tourism of the Nicaragua Institute of Tourism in the capacity as **Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the establishment of the Association of Caribbean Cruise Ship Destinations (ACCD-WG)** delivered an address reporting on the progress and process to develop the Association. The report entailed an overview of the historical development of the ACCD dialogue highlighting the various Ministerial Meetings and ensuing mandates that formed the foundation for the commencement of the dialogue. Also included was a review of the three meetings of the ACCD-WG held to date and corresponding outcomes.

The **ACS Legal Adviser** presented observations to direct the decision making process as it relates to the legal and operational framework towards the establishment of the ACCD, indicating the possible options in this regard and the ramifications and requirements of each, particularly as it relates to membership and funding. The focus of this presentation was framed to respond to the recommendations and requests emanating from the ACCD-WG-3 as well as feedback received from Member States to the draft documents generated by the ACCD consultancy. The report of the Legal Adviser was circulated as part of the meetings documents as **ACS/2012/SCST-23/INF.07-Observations from the ACS Secretariat regarding the Association of Caribbean Cruise Ship Destinations (ACCD) Dialogue.**

In response to the presentation of the ACS Legal Adviser and pursuant to various interventions, the **Chair** proposed that the Ad Hoc Working Group together with the Secretariat prepare a report of the current situation, the progress to date and agree on modalities and the path to follow in the establishment of the ACCD. This report to be presented before November 2012 would be circulated to Member States for feedback and submitted to the next SCST meeting and subsequently the ACS Ministerial Council for final decision. This approach was endorsed by the Meeting.

The representative of the **Republic of Haiti** further proposed that the report also present recommendations on how the ACCD can be integrated into the ACS, through a lighter mechanism to be proposed to the Council of Ministers as an additional option, and recalled his earlier recommendation that the ACCD can potentially be a fifth programmatic area of the STWP. The **Chair** agreed with the proposal to explore this option and recommended that the Representative of Haiti present this proposal in writing to the ACS Secretariat.

VI. Presentation and discussion on the Programme for the Promotion of Multi-Destination Tourism

The ACS **Director for Sustainable Tourism** presented two proposals for the advancement of the promotion of multi-destination tourism in the region. The first proposal was developed with the ACS Directorate of Trade, Development and External Economic Relations (DTDEER) for the convening of a Regional Symposium on Cruise Tourism and Entrepreneurial Strengthening in the Greater Caribbean. This event would gather stakeholders related to the Tourism Industry, International Trade, Small Business Development and Women Interest Groups to explore approaches for strengthening the linkages between the tourism sector and the opportunities for trade, women entrepreneurship and micro, small and medium enterprise development. It was communicated that the Directorate had commenced outreach for funding and received positive feedback for the financing of this initiative. Required from delegations was input to further develop the proposal and also to consider leadership of this initiative. The proposal of the Directorate was circulated as part of the meeting documents as **ACS/2012/SCST-23/INF.10 – Regional Symposium on Cruise Tourism and Entrepreneurial Strengthening in the Greater Caribbean: Opportunities for Women**.

The delegation of **the Republic of Honduras** shared their experience regarding a proposal for a one week workshop for Tourism SMEs in Roatan in order to identify activities to stimulate the economies in the island. This workshop was successful in tailoring a methodology for training which due to its success has been requested by other sectors and countries to be replicated. Honduras offered to share the results and outcomes of the workshop and further to facilitate an introduction to the Training Consultant.

The second proposal concerned the hosting of an informal meeting which would gather regional Tourism Authorities with the Airline and Aviation Industry Executives on the margins of the Latin American and Caribbean Commercial Aviation Industry (ALTA) Airline Leaders Forum, which will be held in Panama City, Panama, November 14-16th, 2012. The meeting would be the first phase in a multi-tiered project which would incorporate (i) hosting of an annual Forum of Airline and Tourism Executives for the Promotion of Multi-destination Tourism in the Greater Caribbean; (ii) the commissioning of a study which collates the diverse regional approaches to MDT, with recommendations for the formulation of a Greater Caribbean MDT Strategy with Policy Implications; and (iii) the institutionalising of MDT and its support mechanisms to include developing and promoting a series of special interest multi-destination packages amongst the destinations in the Greater Caribbean. The proposal of the Directorate was circulated as part of the meeting documents as

ACS/2012/SCST-23/INF.11 - Forum of Airline and Tourism Executives for the Promotion of Multi-Destination Tourism in the Greater Caribbean: Exploring Closer Ties & Opportunities for Connectivity.

In response to this presentation, the representative of **St. Lucia** offered that the experience of Guadeloupe, Martinique and St. Lucia in attempting to develop a MDT strategy revealed that cost was an impediment to travel. He recommended that the Ministries of Finance as well as Ports Authorities be integrated in the discussion. The representative continued that intra-regional travel is significant and growing. Therefore, he proposed the promotion of intra-regional travel as the approach to engaging the parties at the ALTA forum. This recommendation was endorsed by the Chair and the Secretariat.

The **Chair** congratulated the Secretariat on this initiative and fully supported the convening of this initial meeting in Panama highlighting the challenges faced to travel within Central America. The Meeting endorsed the proposal to organise the meeting in Panama as well as to include the Ports authorities in engagement of the Tourism and Airline sectors.

The Representative of the **Republic of Haiti** expanding on the topic of intra-regional travel and trade exchange as a component of MDT suggested that this can be initiated through the hosting of sporting and cultural events and also exploring with member states that already have airlines, the possibility of establishing an intra-regional airline.

VII. Presentation and discussion on the progress and way forward for the Programme for the Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC).

The **ACS Legal Adviser** presented recommendations regarding the establishment of the STZC. Highlighted was the importance of this instrument in the promotion of Sustainable Tourism development in the region, the status in terms of ratifications of the Convention and its protocol such as how many are pending, and the implications as it relates to seeking international support for funding and implementation of projects and other initiatives.

The **Director for Sustainable Tourism** added to the discussion presenting on the advances made to bring the STZC to fruition while awaiting the political endorsement of the full ACS Membership. Also indicated was the formulation of the Project Concept Document (PCD) to reinvigorate the STZC and implement the next steps to fully operationalise the initiative. The PCD was circulated as part of the meeting's documents as **ACS/2012/SCST-23/INF.13** - Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean - Phase III.

In response to the presentations, the delegation of the **Republic of Honduras** expressed their commitment to follow-up on the signing and ratification of the Convention and Protocol. On the topic of the alignment of the STZC indicators with other regional and international initiatives, this delegation reported on a recent meeting with the developers of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC) initiative, held in Washington, highlighting the complementarities with the STZC as it relates to its aims and objectives.

The representative of **Mexico** presented a proposal to share the best practices of the System of Indicators of Sustainability for Mexican Tourism developed to measure the sustainability of local Tourism destinations. As a second proposal, it was suggested as part of strengthening the STZC Regional Sustainable Tourism Indicators in addition to the indicators that measure Tourism Competitiveness established by the World Bank and the Millennium Development Goals to consider the Global Criteria Sustainable Tourism, which are themselves supported by the World Tourism Organization.

The representative of the **Republic of Colombia** also offered to share the methodology and best practices of their national Sustainable Tourism Indicators initiative to ACS Member countries.

VIII. Presentation on the advances made concerning the Programme for the Promotion of Languages and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean.

The Representative of the **Republic of Panama** addressed the meeting concerning the project to establish the CPLC, as lead country in this initiative and host of the Coordinating Centre (CPLC-CC). It was indicated that the Director and Administrator for the CPLC-CC had been identified and space provided within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The representative further requested that a multi-lateral approach was needed to advance the project and in this regard ACS Member States should express their commitment to this project and willingness to contribute to the financial sustainability of the Centre.

The **Director for Sustainable Tourism** thanked the Republic of Panama for their commitment and support of the CPLC, and reported on the advances made by the Secretariat. Mention was made of the consultations held with the Director ad interim of the CPLC-CC connected to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Panama and the steps that have been taken as it relates to finalising the operational framework of the CPLC to include coordinating the two meetings of the CPLC Working Group. It was further indicated that the Directorate was actively engaged in outreach to donors for funding to support and secure implementation. It was also mentioned that Member States had received from the ACS the Ministerial Council Agreement parallel to Panama's own outreach initiatives. Pursuant to these outreach measures, countries had requested additional information on the parameters of the financial contribution, which the DST had submitted to Panama for response and was awaiting receipt.

It was agreed that the Directorate in collaboration with Panama would provide an estimate of what would be needed to implement the project and subsequently request specific amounts and quantities from Member States. This, to secure the advancement of the project and pursuant to the request made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama to Member States. Additionally, the SCST/DST was mandated to commence the process for the exchange of students among Member States while the CPLC structure is being finalised.

IX. Presentation and discussion on the progress and way forward for the Programme for the Establishment of the Regional Tourist Safety and Security Network (RTSSN)

The **Director for Sustainable Tourism** presented two proposals to advance the establishment of the RTSSN. The first proposal was the hosting of an annual Capacity Building Workshop on Tourism Safety and Security to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among the ACS membership in the area of tourism policing and other safety and security issues relevant to the Greater Caribbean. The objective in this regard, to organize in conjunction with partner organisations a series of capacity building exercises in the context of Visitor Safety and Security and Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation and Management as they relate to tourism. For the convening of the Inaugural Workshop, the Directorate has been contacted by the International Association of Francophone Economic Intelligence (AIFIE, for its acronym in French), who expressed an interest in partnering for the joint execution of this event, additionally the Directorate has been in consultation with the Republic of Suriname regarding hosting of the workshop. The proposal was circulated as

part of the meeting's documents as **ACS/2012/SCST-23/INF.16** - Proposal for the Regional Tourist Safety and Security Network (RTSSN): Capacity Building Workshop.

The second presentation was the Institutionalisation of National Tourism Police Units through the engagement of At-Risk-Youth, which would focus on the transfer of knowledge, best-practices and experiences of countries with already established Tourism Police units, and would facilitate delivery of training, technical assistance and subsequently documentation to increase the competencies of law enforcement and tourism stakeholders in the Greater Caribbean Region. The proposal was circulated as part of the meeting's documents as **ACS/2012/SCST-23/INF.17** - Tourism Policing through Engagement of At-Risk Youth Project.

The Representative of the **Republic of Honduras** recommended the development of a consolidated Action Plan that could guide Nicaragua as Chair in integration actions between the various regional and international agencies, to reduce duplication and increase complementarities, indicating that the UNWTO had also developed protocols as it relates to crisis management. It was suggested that Nicaragua consider hosting the high-level forum on Tourism Safety and Security to be convened by the UNWTO.

The **SITCA** representative expressed interest and willingness to collaborate in this area, highlighting the various initiatives that have been ongoing on the national and regional level in that sub-region. Highlighted were the development of a Regional Security Committee comprised of the heads of Tourist security in the Ministries of Tourism; development of a study program that is being implemented by national tourism police academies; production of handbooks to facilitate training and capacity building in strategic areas, such as Security, Health and Tourism; and in the area of communication a crisis management strategy had been developed with a network of tourism communicators. A new initiative being developed with assistance from the Swiss Cooperation was an emergency phone number, with international call centres linked to a wider safety and security network.

The **CTO** representative also shared their initiatives such as the Regional Disaster Risk Strategy and Action Plan developed in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) which is being revised and will include the development of a monitoring and evaluation system to assist members to strengthen capacities in this area. Additionally, manuals had been developed as it relates to health and safety in the industry and communication in times of crisis.

It was agreed that the ACS-SICTA-CTO would collate the various initiatives in this topic and submit a joint proposal in 60 days on the best way to move forward. An issue to consider in this regard is the implication in terms of the reaction and perception of the national population if National Tourism Police units are institutionalised.

The delegation of the **Republic of Nicaragua** shared the experience developed in this area indicating that this topic was a national priority and that a country-wide initiative had been designed based on the regional initiative being implemented by SITCA. In this regard the focus has been on training and a training plan had been developed and manuals produced for tourism police and the police in general which covered a comprehensive range of topics. According to the delegation, the security model was a multi-stakeholder community-based approach which involved the various sectors related to the industry. In this regard, Nicaragua was developing a national call centre or hotline for tourists which would connect directly with the national tourist police. Needed were funds to promote the work being done by the Tourism Police units and to obtain proper uniforms and equipment, in order to make them more visible as an entity.

The Nicaraguan delegation offered to share the best practice and methodology to the countries of the Greater Caribbean as did the representative of the Republic of Colombia

who highlighted the advances made nationally in this area and offered cooperation and willingness to share their national best practices.

X. Discussion on the convening of the 3rd Meeting of Ministers of Tourism of the Greater Caribbean (TMM-3)

As approved at the SCST-22 Meeting, the 3rd Meeting of Ministers of Tourism of the Greater Caribbean (TMM-3) will be held in 2013. The **Director for Sustainable Tourism** presented considerations for the proposed Theme suggested as '*Enhancing the Global Competitiveness of the Regional Tourism Industry through the Sustainable Development of Niche Markets*'. An Agenda was also outlined which included case studies and presentations by Country representatives and regional and international experts for knowledge enhancing and to deliver capacity-building tools and strategies for the development and strengthening of key Regional Niche Tourism Markets. The considerations document was circulated as part of the meeting's documents as **ACS/2012/SCST-23/WP.02** – Briefing Document on the Meeting of Ministers of Tourism of the Greater Caribbean – Considerations for the Convening of TMM-3.

The **Chair** endorsed the proposal of the Director and further suggested that focus be on the following:

- Identification of source markets for market niches
- The strengths and weaknesses of each country
- Marketing
- Product development and competitiveness.

It was brought forward by the **CTO** representative that the Caribbean region is developing a strategy for Health and Wellness as it relates to Spas, which may also be valuable to the other countries.

The meeting agreed to Nicaragua hosting the meeting and to explore the most feasible date for the convening of this meeting.

XI. Road to the Fifth ACS Summit

The **Director for Sustainable Tourism** presented considerations to the Draft Declaration and Plan of Action being developed as part of the preparatory process for the convening of the Fifth ACS Summit of Heads of State and/or Governments. The meeting was subsequently invited to provide recommendations to the drafts. The Document with the Considerations of the Directorate was circulated as part of the meeting's documents as **ACS/2012/SCST-23/INF.18** – Considerations of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism on the Documents to be presented at the 5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government.

It was agreed to include collaboration with Regional and International Organisations for the advancement of the STWP and to pursue a closer working relationship with the CTO and SITCA through the development of a clear plan of action to be followed by concrete actions.

Discussion on the proposed collaboration ensued based on a review of the Matrix submitted by the joint Secretariats. The importance of Member States taking leadership of specific programmatic areas or individual initiatives was again reiterated. In this regard, the **Chair** requested from Member States to indicate their interest in Chairmanship or leadership, to which it was agreed that as a next step the document would be circulated for Member States consideration and action as it relates to the specific areas they may be interested in leading.

The Representative of the Republic of Haiti further presented a draft resolution on Food Sovereignty and Security for inclusion in the Draft Declaration. This resolution made reference to the 2009-2010 Plan of Action of the SCST, at which time the Republic of Haiti occupied the Presidency and seeks to promote the implementation of a strategy on "Food sovereignty", in order to ensure sustainability and "food security" for the countries and peoples of the Greater Caribbean.

XII. Discussion on the Date and Venue of the 24th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-24)

The **Director for Sustainable Tourism** provided guidance to the meeting as it relates to the time-frame for hosting. It was agreed that the SCST-24 meeting will take place in May/June 2013, which would serve as part of the preparatory process of the TMM-3. It was also agreed that the TMM-3 would be held in September 2013, the specific date to be determined.

XIII. Parting Words of the Director of Sustainable Tourism

The **Director for Sustainable Tourism** delivered parting words to the meeting in view of the imminent end of her tenure at the ACS, effective March, 2013. In her remarks the Director commented on her work with the various Chairs of the SCST beginning in 2008 with The Bahamas followed by the Republic of Haiti and culminating with the Chairmanship of the Republic of Nicaragua for the past two years, indicating that their leadership, support and guidance had been instrumental in the advancement of the work programme and in fostering co-operation in the area of Sustainable Tourism among the countries of the Greater Caribbean.

The Director also thanked CTO and SITCA for their consistent support as founding observers, and made mention of Regional partners such as CARIBSAVE, UNWTO, IICA and ECLAC for the value added from an institutional perspective. Noted also were the contributions of donor countries and the collective ACS Membership.

In closing the Director extended her appreciation to the ACS Secretariat for their support and camaraderie. She further expressed her gratitude to the team of the Directorate making specific mention of the names and contribution of the respective Advisors, Research Assistants and the Secretary, over the five year term of her tenure, thanking them for their hard work, friendship and contribution to the advancement of the work programme.

The **Chair** congratulated the Director and praised her for the excellent work and commitment to the ACS and the countries of the Greater Caribbean. A bouquet and plaque were presented as a token of appreciation.

The delegations of the **Republic of Suriname** and the **Republic of Haiti** joined the Chair in expressing appreciation to the Director and commended her on the hard work, dedication and high degree of professionalism exhibited throughout her tenure, making note of her endearing affable nature, and wishing her success and best wishes in future endeavours.

XIV. Any Other Business

The delegation of the **Republic of Nicaragua** in addressing the meeting, proposed to extend the contract of the Director of Sustainable Tourism, Director de Mees, citing the demanding Agenda for the upcoming period to include the hosting of the TMM-3 Meeting and making note of the time that would be required to recruit and select a suitable

replacement candidate for the post. In this regard, it was proposed to extend the contract of the Director until December 2013. This proposal was seconded by the **Chair** and thirdly supported by the delegation of the **Republic of Honduras**.

The meeting unanimously agreed to extend the Director's contract until December 2013 and it was agreed to submit this proposal to the 18th Ministerial Meeting in January 2013 for consideration. Director de Mees expressed acceptance of the meetings request indicating that this acceptance was dependent on the approval of the Ministerial Council.

XV. Approval of the Procedure for the Draft Rapporteurs Report

The Meeting approved the procedure for the Draft Rapporteurs Report in accordance with Ministerial Agreement 13/10, such that the DST, in coordination with the Republic of Suriname as Rapporteur would undertake the preparation of the Draft Report in the three languages and distribute to the meeting participants for further comments. Further that the Meeting will commit to return their comments and suggested changes in the required timeframe.

XVI. Closing Remarks

In his closing remarks the **Chair** reiterated the main conclusions of the meeting and expressed thanks to the delegations for the two days of productive deliberations.

ANNEX A / ANEXO A / ANNEXE A
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS / LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES / LISTES DE PARTICIPANTS

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