

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

24TH MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND 2ND PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE 3RD MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TOURISM OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN (TMM-3)

Port-of-Spain, Trinidad July 16th and 17th, 2013

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

23rd Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-23)

This report covers the main activities undertaken by the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the ACS since the 23rd Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-23), held in Managua, Republic of Nicaragua, June 28th and 29th, 2012.

The SCST-23 meeting was held under the auspices of the former Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Nicaragua, Honourable Mario Salinas Pasos, in the capacity as Chair of the Special Committee. Thirty (30) delegates were in attendance at this meeting, including representatives from ten (10) Member States; one International Organisation, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); and the two Founding Observers: Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat (SITCA for its acronym in Spanish) and the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO). The SCST-23 reviewed the progress made and approved projects presented for the advancement of the Sustainable Tourism Work Program. The Rapporteur's Report of SCST-23 is being distributed as document **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.02**.

The Directorate would like to make special mention of the *Nicaraguan Institute of Tourism (INTUR)* and notes with appreciation and gratitude the commitment and support of INTUR in their capacity as SCST Chair for two consecutive years, 2011 and 2012, and the efforts made in contributing to the progress and advancement of the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme. The Directorate remains grateful for the leadership provided, the generosity extended and the interest and enthusiasm exhibited, in both directing and facilitating the projects and activities of the Directorate.

Executive Board of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism for 2013

At the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council, held in Panama City, Republic of Panama on February 18th, 2013, new members of the ACS Special Committees' Executive Boards were elected for the 2013 annum. The composition of the newly elected Executive Board of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism are as follows: Chairman: the Regional Council of Martinique; Vice-Chairmen: the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Costa-Rica; Rapporteur: the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The Directorate thanks and congratulates the new SCST Board and in particular recognises the support received from the Regional Council of Martinique in the capacity as Chair of the SCST, and the assistance and generosity of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago through its Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC), in facilitating the 24th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable

Tourism. The Directorate further reiterates its willingness and commitment to working with the new SCST leadership for the advancement of the ACS Sustainable Tourism Work Programme.

THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM WORK PROGRAMME

In the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme (STWP) 2012-2013, the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism has continued advancing the on-going projects within the framework of the four Programmatic Areas as approved at the 20th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-20).

As it relates to activities of the Directorate for the period, among its primary activities, the Directorate in accordance with Ministerial Council Agreement 12/11 on the Work Programme, contributed to the Reports of the Office of the Secretary General by providing information on the execution of the Work Programme. In this regard, the contribution of the Directorate formed part of the Secretariat's report submitted to the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council and subsequently the Fifth Summit of the Heads of States and/or Government of the ACS, held in Pétiion-Ville, Republic of Haiti, April 26th, 2013.

The Directorate in presenting considerations for the continuation of the Work Programme for the 2014-2015 biennium has distributed document **ACS/2013/SCST-24/WP.01**. The Directorate maintains its recommendation that as a strategic approach to advance the projects, fulfil programme objectives and address Regional priorities, there is a **pressing need for Member States and Associate Member States to champion each initiative** and in so doing, support implementation as well as outreach to development agencies and private sector entities for partnership and funding.

As it relates to execution of the various programmatic areas, the following are the main activities that were undertaken:

1. Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC)

At the time that this report was prepared, the STZC Convention has been signed by all 25 ACS Member States and one Associate Member. However, it requires the ratification of three additional countries. Of the total number of signatures to the Protocol, (14) obtained, 9 are from states that have deposited instruments of ratification to the main Convention. Consequently, 6 additional signatures are required. It is vital that the **main legal instrument** on sustainable tourism for the Greater Caribbean, the **Convention Establishing the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC) and its Protocol**, be ratified and entered into force. The support of Ministers of Tourism is a crucial catalyst in promoting the necessary actions in each State, in this regard, the Secretariat has continued efforts to encourage Member States and Associate Members that have not done so, to ratify the Convention and its Protocol. An update on the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean's Convention and its Protocol is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.03**.

Concurrently, in setting an enabling environment for the establishment, promotion and for the further development of the STZC, the Directorate has advanced in the following areas:

- a. The Directorate has been collaborating with the Regional Council of Martinique on the project to develop the Regional Cooperation Mechanism (RCM) component of the STZC. In this regard, consultations have concluded and the consultancy is expected to commence. This project will facilitate the expansion of the Sustainability Indicators Project to include at least one destination in each of the ACS Member States; as well as development of the STZC website, to improve the exchange between national and local level tourism organisations and promote the use of indicators and related tools. The Project Concept Document for the RCM is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.04**.
- b. For the reporting period, the Directorate has produced two publications of the STZC Newsletter "In the Zone", focussing on the Arts and Crafts of the region and secondly on the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme. The newsletter is intended to highlight the efforts of the ACS in the establishment of the STZC and facilitates the exchange of information and experiences. Additionally, it promotes sustainable tourism initiatives, best practices and activities in the Greater Caribbean.
- c. Pursuant to a request of the Republic of Nicaragua as Chair of the SCST, to explore the "Strengthening of the STZC by adopting International Tourism and Tourism Competitiveness Indicators defined by the World Economic Forum, linked to the Millennium Development Goals", the Directorate has developed a proposal for a Pilot Project focusing on Implementation of the Regional Sustainable Tourism Indicators of the STZC in Ethnic and Indigenous Communities of the Greater Caribbean linked to attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. The primary objective in this regard is to contribute to the social and economic development of Ethnic and Indigenous Communities, through cultivation and/or enhancement of the Tourism sector. The briefing document on this Project is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.05**.

2. Promotion of Multidestination Tourism

There are three projects currently within the Multidestination Tourism (MDT) programme. The first is the *Forum of Airline and Tourism Executives*. At the SCST-23 Meeting, the Directorate presented a proposal for the advancing of this initiative, which includes:

- Hosting of a meeting of Airline Executives and Tourism Officials on the margins of the Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA) Airline Leaders Forum.
- Study to collate the diverse regional and sub-regional approaches to MDT, with recommendations for a Greater Caribbean MDT Strategy.
- At the regional level, the institutionalizing of MDT and its support mechanisms.

Pursuant to outreach to ALTA, the Directorate has been in consultations regarding their proposal to host Aviation Day Meetings which would gather the Regional Tourism and Transport Authorities with the Airline Executives, for Central America and the CARICOM sub-regions respectively. Aviation day Central America was held in San Salvador, El Salvador, April 12th, 2013 and Aviation Day Caribbean is scheduled for November 13th 2013 in Cancun, Mexico. The Directorate is collaborating with both the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) and ALTA for the hosting of this event. A discussion brief of the Directorates proposal is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/WP.02**.

The second project is the establishment of *the Association Caribbean Cruise-Ship Destinations (ACCD)*. The SCST-23 meeting mandated that the ACCD Ad Hoc Working Group (ACCD-WG) in collaboration with the Secretariat prepare a *“Report on the progress to date and agree on modalities for the establishment of the ACCD”*. This document entitled: Report and Analysis on the Process Relating to the Establishment of the Association Caribbean Cruise-Ship Destinations (ACCD), was forwarded to the members of the Ad-Hoc Working Group for the ACCD on January 11th, 2013. The recommendations from the working group affirm *that the ACCD should not be established as a new Regional organisation, but that cruise tourism should be incorporated as a permanent topic in the Multi-Destination Tourism Programmatic area of the ACS Sustainable Tourism Work Programme*. It was further indicated that efforts should focus on obtaining more knowledge-based exchanges and data gathering via studies, symposia and projects on issues of mutual interest to the destinations in the Region, so as to facilitate ongoing dialogue and co-operation on Cruise Tourism in the Greater Caribbean. The ACCD report is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.06**.

The third project was designed as a joint collaboration with the ACS Directorate of Trade and External Economic Relations. This project entitled *Cruise Tourism and Entrepreneurial strengthening in the Greater Caribbean: Opportunities for Women*, will deliver training and capacity building tools to women with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism industry. Currently we are engaged in *consultations with donor agencies*, to obtain funding for implementation of this project.

3. Promotion of Languages and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean

The two main projects being pursued in this area are the *Centre for the Promotion of Languages and Cultures (CPLC)* and the implementation of *Student Exchange Programs* among the ACS countries for language training and cultural immersion.

With respect to advances for the period, the Republic of Panama formally *institutionalized the Coordinating Centre for the CPLC*, allocating both staff and office space within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the part of the Secretariat, the Directorate was successful in formalizing the *CPLC Working Group (CPLC-WG)* comprised of the participating countries: the Republic of Panama, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Regional Council of Guadeloupe, and *hosted two meetings* of the working group. The Directorate also developed the *Terms of Reference for a consultant to formalize the operational aspects of the CPLC*, to facilitate financing outreach by Panama, as Chair of the CPLC.

A *Project Concept Document (PCD)* was developed for the student exchange component inclusive of an estimate of project costs for overall implementation as well as for the exchange programme. The Project Concept Document is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.07**. Member States and regional partners have also been outreached requesting information of scholarships and awards available for language learning. Concurrently, the Directorate is collaborating with the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO) to consolidate a joint implementation approach for 2013. In this regard a proposal has been submitted to the CARIFORUM Secretariat for possible funding under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

4. Establishment of the Regional Tourist Safety and Security Network

The Directorate in advancing this programmatic area presented two specific initiatives to the SCST-23 meeting which were approved, the *Regional Tourist Safety and Security Network Annual Capacity Building Workshop / Seminar* and the *Project to develop a Tourism Vigilance Program engaging the Youth*.

Following the meeting, the Directorate actively engaged in *outreach for partnership and financing* of the afore-mentioned activities which were met with commendations, however funding has not been forthcoming to date. Implementation of the *Tourist Safety and Security Seminar*, which was being planned in collaboration with the Tourism Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (TDC) was postponed due to internal changes at TDC, which resulted in TDC no longer being able to host.

Similarly, consultations with donors in relation to the *Tourism Vigilance Program engaging the Youth* although being met with interest, has not yielded the requisite funds for implementation. This project remains a priority activity and therefore the Directorate will continue efforts to mobilise the necessary resources. This initiative will focus on the transfer of knowledge, best-practices and experiences of countries with Tourism Policing initiatives and will facilitate delivery of training, technical assistance and subsequently documentation to increase the competencies of law enforcement and tourism stakeholders in the Greater Caribbean Region. Member States sponsorship and/or championing of this initiative are being requested, and the Project brief is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/ INF.09**.

Related to this programmatic area, the SCST-23 meeting requested a *Joint Paper on Tourism Safety and Security in the Greater Caribbean*, by the Regional Secretariats: the ACS Sustainable Tourism Directorate, the CTO and SITCA. In this regard, research was initiated and an initial draft of this research is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/ INF.08**.

The Director also participated as a Panellist in the *Tourism Security Training Program* hosted by the Organisation of American States (OAS), in Roseau Dominica, June 10th-14th, 2013. A presentation was made on ACS interventions related to the promotion of Visitor Safety and Security.

HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS

The ACS hosted the *Fifth Summit of Heads of State and/or Government* under the kind auspices of the Government of the Republic of Haiti, on April 26th, 2013. The Summit which had as its theme: *Revitalizing the Vision of the Association of Caribbean States for a Stronger and more United Greater Caribbean*, was a tremendous success and received participation from 12 Regional Heads of States and/or Government. Accompanying the Regional Heads were Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other high-level delegations of 24 Member and Associate Member States, 4 Founding Observers, 7 Observer Countries and representatives of various Regional and International Organisations. The Directorate joins in congratulating the Republic of Haiti for an outstanding Meeting and the exceptional efforts extended in hosting. The *Plan of Action of Pétion-Ville* emanating from the Summit in relation to Sustainable Tourism is presented to the meeting under document cover **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.13**.

As it pertains to upcoming activities, the ACS will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary of existence in 2014. Mexico, the current Chair of the ACS Ministerial Council has offered to host a special gathering of the Heads of States and/or Governments of the ACS to celebrate this auspicious occasion. Additional information is forthcoming and will be duly circulated.

As agreed at the SCST-23 Meeting, the *Third Meeting of Ministers of Tourism of the Greater Caribbean (TMM-3)*, would be held in 2013, the specific date to be determined. The Republic of Nicaragua has graciously offered to host this meeting and it was agreed to explore the theme: '*Enhancing the Global Competitiveness of the Regional Tourism Industry through the Sustainable Development of Niche Markets*'.

TMM-3 will provide a platform for knowledge-exchange and include case studies and presentations on best-practises by Country representatives and regional and international experts related to developing and strengthening Regional Niche Tourism Markets. A capacity-building component would be included to deliver tools and strategies in the following areas:

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

A discussion brief on TMM-3 is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/ INF.14**.

CO-OPERATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

The consistent consultations with Regional Agencies with a Sustainable Tourism Portfolio have developed in an expression of interest to develop a *Joint Regional Agenda* for sustainable destination management and the promotion of sustainable tourism. One of the primary objectives is to garner wider regional engagement and support for the STZC. The Directorate in collaboration with the Republic of Nicaragua hosted a very successful *Meeting of the Regional Tourism Agencies on Sustainable Tourism*, in Managua, Nicaragua, February 18, 2013. In attendance were representatives of the CARIBSAVE Partnership, Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat, Caribbean Tourism Organisation, Organisation of American States and the United Nations World Tourism Organization. Among the main outcomes it was agreed to establish a Regional Network/Working Group on Sustainable Tourism in the Greater Caribbean to facilitate co-operation among the organisations. It was also agreed to host future meetings and activities, in order to continue the dialogue among the partners, and solidify the areas identified for collaboration. A joint High-level Conference is planned as a follow-up activity, to facilitate an interactive exchange with the donor community. The joint communiqué emanating from this meeting is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.10**.

The Directorate is also engaged in a collaboration with the French Development Agency (AFD) who has agreed to fund a project which explores Professional Training in Tourism. This project in the first phase seeks the commissioning of a *Study/Research Publication* to document the needs and priorities for *Professional Training in the Tourism Sector in the Greater Caribbean*, with the aim of developing a Framework for the development and implementation of a comprehensive Training and Capacity-building Programme. A briefing document on this project brief is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.11**.

The Directorate has been successful in reinstating discussions with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and is in the process of updating the terms of a *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* for co-operation between the ACS and the UNWTO. The scope of the MOU includes co-operation in the area of tourism satellite accounts; Sustainable tourism; Risk and crisis management and the exchange of information, experiences and best-practises. The draft MOU is being circulated as **ACS/2013/SCST-24/INF.12**.

DST HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENTS

In March 3rd, 2013, the contract of the former Director of Sustainable Tourism, Ms. Gloria de Mees came to an end. On April 2nd 2013, Mr. Julio Eduardo Orozco Pérez, a citizen of the Republic of Guatemala assumed the office of Director of Sustainable Tourism.

In April 1st, 2013, the contract of the former Research Assistant to the Directorate, Ms. Whitney Dular came to an end. On June 1st, 2013, Ms. Rehanna Ramroop joined the team of the Directorate in the position of Research Assistant.

All members of the Directorate have been fully involved in the preparation and organisation of the documentation for this meeting and the initiatives related to the advancement of the Work Programme. In this regard, the efforts and contributions of both the former and current members of the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism, to the implementation of the Work Programme of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism are highly valued and to be commended.