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## **ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)**

### **24<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (SCST-24) AND 2<sup>ND</sup> PREPARATORY MEETING OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TOURISM OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN (TMM-3)**

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, July 16-17, 2013**

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#### **JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE CONCLUSION OF FIRST MEETING OF AGENCIES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION**

**Managua, Nicaragua, February 18, 2013**

1. The First Meeting of Regional Agencies of Sustainable Tourism in the Wider Caribbean Region was held in Managua, Nicaragua, on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013. In attendance at the meeting were the CARIBSAVE Partnership, the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Secretary for Tourism Integration in Central America (SITCA for the acronym in Spanish) and the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The Meeting was convened by the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and hosted by the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Nicaragua in their capacity as Chairman of the ACS Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism.
2. The Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Nicaragua, the Honourable Mario Salinas Pasos, in his capacity as Chair of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States welcomed the Regional Agencies present and expressed satisfaction at their participation and their individual efforts in the advancement and promotion of Sustainable Tourism in the Region.
3. The Minister commended the Agencies for being proactive in seeking to explore a more synergistic approach to the execution of their work programmes and to foster closer coordination and collaboration. The Minister expressed the honour of Nicaragua as host of this first historic meeting of the Regional Tourism Agencies.
4. The Meeting reaffirmed that tourism can make a significant contribution to the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental, particularly as it seeks to generate stable employment, income-earning opportunities, social inclusion and contribute to poverty alleviation.
5. Agencies met to share their respective work programmes and outlined their priority focal areas, main activities, and current and pipeline projects highlighting specific requests for collaboration as it relates to

funding/technical assistance, with the objective of continuing to advance issues of mutual interest, in an open spirit of cooperation among all the institutions taking part in this dialogue.

6. Views were exchanged on the challenges facing the Wider Caribbean Region including declining international flows, reduced economic activity and the impact these have on all spheres of tourism activity in the countries of this region.
7. The meeting identified a core set of issues which the Regional Agencies are already engaged in or seek to develop in the area of Sustainable Tourism, namely:
  - **Policy Implementation**
    1. Destination Stewardship
    2. Sustainable Tourism Certification
    3. Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage
    4. Inter-Sectoral Linkages
    5. Public-Private Partnerships or Alliances
  - **Developing Sustainable Livelihoods and Poverty Alleviation**
    1. Youth engagement and partnerships
    2. Strengthening MSME's
    3. Human Resource Development
  - **Tourism Safety and Security**
  - **Marketing**
    1. Promotion of Multi-Destination Tourism and Intra-Regional Travel
    2. Promotion of Sustainable Destinations
    3. Niche Market Development
  - **Transport**
  - **Conservation of the Environment**
    1. Greening of the Industry and Energy Efficiency
    2. Climate Change
8. The Meeting discussed and agreed on establishing a Regional Network or Working Group on Sustainable Tourism in the Greater Caribbean for the purpose of strengthening functional partnerships and ensuring the sustainability of this collective approach by:
  - Improving existing mechanisms for communication in general and the coordination of specific projects, activities and events to contribute to more efficient use of resources and reduce the incidents of duplication of efforts;

- Participating in each other's respective future meetings and activities to continue the dialogue among the partners and align complementary work programmes and where possible jointly convene meetings or develop projects for joint implementation;
  - Sharing and exchanging knowledge products such standards and best practices, research publications and studies;
  - Addressing mutual issues and concerns on regional and international forums;
  - Exploring the possibility of a Regional multi-stakeholder initiative as presented by the Nicaragua Tourism Institute comprising of a Pilot Project focussing on Implementation of the Regional Sustainable Tourism Indicators of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC) and World Bank Competitiveness Indicators in Ethnic and Indigenous Communities of the Greater Caribbean linked to attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
  - Developing a multi-stakeholder project focussing on 'Voluntourism'.
  - Hosting of a *Sustainable Destinations Donors Forum*, proposed as a joint high-level conference to facilitate an interactive exchange between the Regional Tourism Agencies and their NGO partners with the international donor community, Regional and International Foundations and individual corporations. The CARIBSAVE Partnership offered to lead this initiative.
9. The Meeting expressed their appreciation to the ACS Secretariat for providing a platform to pursue the actualisation of effective dialogue and collaboration among the regional institutions with a Sustainable Tourism portfolio within the Greater Caribbean.
10. The Meeting expressed their profound gratitude to the Government and People of the Republic of Nicaragua for the excellent hospitality extended to their delegations and for the arrangements which ensured a successful meeting.

**MANAGUA, NICARAGUA**

**18 February 2013**