

The Association of Caribbean States consolidates its role as an organism for cooperation in the Greater Caribbean.



Panama City, Panama (February 22nd, 2013) – “There is a new dynamism and new perspectives of growth and development which plays a very important role in the international arena and they promote the way in which decisions are made in the process of integration in the Greater Caribbean,” informed the Ambassador Alfonso Múnera, Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) at the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the ACS.

The Meeting which took place on February 22nd was presided by the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama, Francisco Álvarez de Soto. Vice Minister Álvarez de Soto chaired this Meeting alongside the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Haiti, the Honourable Pierre Richard Casimir; the Sub Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States, Vanessa Rubio and the Secretary General of the ACS.

Mexico has now assumed the position of Chair of the Ministerial Council for the period 2013 -2014. This position was previously held by Panama for one year.

In the context of the Fifth Summit of the ACS, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Haiti, Mr. Pierre Casimir indicated that the Fifth Summit will be an opportunity for the Association to strengthen its position both regionally and internationally. Moreover, it will give the ACS more visibility to better fulfill its founding objectives. The Minister further stressed that he senses a new dynamism within the Association which heralds a new era for the ACS and the revitalization of relations between Members and Associate Members.

Ambassador Múnera further mentioned that “the Haiti Summit will be historic, sealing a new life for

the Association as an organization that will assist in the construction of relations between Central America, the Caribbean islands and the Continental Caribbean.”

The meeting facilitated political dialogue for concrete action where the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Winston Dookeran referred to the upcoming Conference for Ministers ECLAC meeting which will be convened in March in Bogotá. He suggested that regional organizations such as the ACS, SICA and CARICOM should take the opportunity at this meeting to engage in discussions on incorporating efforts to integrate the private sector to facilitate an influx of capital and investment in the region.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, the Honourable María Ángela Holguín Cuella proposed to host a meeting with regional airlines to promote and facilitate air connectivity among ACS countries in the Greater Caribbean.

The Ministerial Council appointed three new Directors; Mr. Julio Eduardo Orozco from Guatemala, Mr. Alberto Duran Espaillat from the Dominican Republic and Dr. Janine Dawkins from Jamaica, who will head the Directorates of Sustainable Tourism, Trade Development and External Economic Relations and Disaster Risk Reduction respectively.

The meeting also approved the Chairmanship of the Special Committees led by the following countries: Disaster Risk Reduction (Honduras), Transport (Suriname), Tourism (Martinique), Trade (Colombia), Budget and Administration (Mexico) and the Special Fund (Panama).

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Honduras, Guatemala, Cuba and Costa Rica were also in attendance.

The Association of Caribbean States is the organization for consultation, cooperation and concerted action in trade, transport, sustainable tourism and natural disasters in the Greater Caribbean and is comprised of 25 member Countries and 4 Associate Member Countries.