ACS TOURISM AUTHORITIES TO MEET IN TRINIDAD

On July 22nd and 23rd, 2015 high-level Tourism officials and representatives from key regional and international organisations will converge in the vibrant capital of Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, as the Directorate of Sustainable Tourism of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), hosts its 26th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism (SCST-26).

The Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism meetings held annually gathers the Ministers and High-level Authorities of Tourism from ACS Member Countries and provides a platform to address issues relevant to the Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Region. The meeting also provides an opportunity to review and validate the projects and activities of the ACS in the area of Sustainable Tourism, and related efforts to promote sustainability in the Tourism industry. The main focus of this gathering being the facilitation of multi-lateral dialogue aimed at enhancing co-operation among countries in this most critical area.

With the input of the ACS Member and Associate Member States, the SCST-26 Meeting plans to explore avenues for the promotion, growth and continued sustainability of the Regional Tourism Industry. In this regard, delegates at this year's meeting will discuss among others, the advances made and the way forward in relation to initiatives of the ACS in the implementation of the Sustainable Tourism Work Programme.

Among the primary topics for discussion will be presentation of the results of the Regional Co-operation Mechanism of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC) project, an initiative which is being implemented with cooperation and assistance from the Regional Council of Martinique and the INTERREG IV Caribbean Space Programme. This project which has been on-going for the past year includes the development of a website, the publication of brochures, and

destination stewardship manuals to enhance the visibility and value of the STZC to ACS Member countries. The first day of the meeting, July 22nd, will focus on the presentation of the results of the consultancy which will facilitate the official unveiling of the website, brochure and other collaterals developed.

Another related initiative which supports the establishment of the Region as a Sustainable Tourism Zone, is the 'Training for Careers in Sustainable Tourism Project', which is being implemented with co-operation and assistance from the French Development Agency (AFD). This project entails a study to identify the status and needs of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the Tourism sector in the Region and the development of a Regional TVET Framework for future professional training and capacity-building programs. The results of this initiative and discussions related to implementation of the TVET Framework will be held on July 23rd, the second day of the meeting.

The SCST-26 Meeting would be the eighth iteration of this auspicious event being held in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, which hosts the Headquarters of the Association and seat of the Secretariat. The meeting will be presided by the Guatemala Tourism Institute on behalf of the Republic of Guatemala, Chair of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism, with the support of Vice-Chairs, Costa Rica and Panama, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as Rapporteur.

The ACS Directorate of Sustainable Tourism expects a high level of participation from its member countries and anticipates productive and fruitful deliberations.

Julio Orozco is the Director of Sustainable Tourism and Amanda Charles is the Sustainable Tourism Adviser of the Association of Caribbean States. Any feedback or comments should be sent to feedback@acs-aec.org