ACS to Enhance Business Mobility

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 11th August, 2015- The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) through its Directorate of Trade Development and External Economic Relations convened the 3rd Meeting of the Working Group on Business Visas to further review and discuss the proposed ACS Business Travel Card Scheme, an initiative of the ACS in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The overall objective of this initiative is to improve business mobility management for trade enhancement. In particular, its scope will be to enhance a business environment that is focused on opening and facilitating trade, through the movement of business persons, which in turn will encourage and promote greater employment creation by supporting the identification, and development of new areas/sectors of interest, and overall trade and investment activities.

In his inaugural discourse, His Excellency Alfonso Múnera, Secretary General of the ACS stated that this project is of extreme importance and relevance as it seeks to build and stimulate business relationships between Latin America and the Caribbean. He indicated that this Business Travel Card Scheme is already successfully being used by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum, and further expressed his desire for many ACS countries to take part in this initiative.

Mr Alberto Duran, Director of Trade Development and External Economic Relations of the ACS underscored the importance of the meeting as it marks the possibility of significant progress in the process of analysis, approval and subsequent adoption of a model that promises to open doors for the increase in trade opportunities and intra-regional investment in the Greater Caribbean.

Among the meeting’s principal activities was the report on the advancements made in the Business Visa Initiative in the Greater Caribbean, an in depth review of the ACS Business Travel Card Scheme and an analysis of the initiative’s impact on business and investment.

Moreover, the meeting was aimed at receiving indication of interest and support for the ACS Business Travel Card Scheme from Member States, as well as approval for the proposal and accompanying Guidelines and Operational Framework to be referred to during the Special Committee on Trade Development and External Economic Relations.

The III Meeting of the Working Group on Business Visas concluded with Member States expressing their interest in participating in the ACS Business Travel Card Scheme model which was presented by the IOM, as a possible facilitator of trade and intra-regional investment in the Greater Caribbean. It was also decided that the ACS will circulate a draft Memorandum of Understanding ahead of the XXX Meeting of the Special Committee on Trade Development and External Economic Relations whereby interested Member States will officially submit in writing, their commitment to take part in this initiative.

The meeting welcomed the participation of Immigration and Trade Policy Officials of 16 ACS Member States, both in person and via video-conferencing services; representatives of Regional and International Organisations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Expert Consultant on the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA); along with local and regional private-sector stakeholders from Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic and Guatemala.