**19th Intersessional Preparatory Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council convenes in Port of Spain**




Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 10th November 2016- The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) will convene the 19th Intersessional Preparatory Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council on 11th November 2016 at the Hilton Hotel, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Honourable Dennis Moses, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of the Host country is expected to address representatives of the Member and Associate Member Countries of the ACS, as well as Founding Observers, Observer Countries and Social Partners during the meeting's opening ceremony. Also contributing to the panel of speakers will be His Excellency Rogelio Sierra Díaz, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs or his representative, in his capacity as Chairman of the Council, delivering the opening address, followed by Her Excellency Dr. June Soomer, Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States, who will present the introductory remarks.

The principal objectives outlined for the meeting include a Report of the Chairman of the Ministerial Council, covering the period following the 21st Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council held in Pétion Ville, Haiti, on January 19th, 2016 to present. A report will also be presented by the Secretary General, covering the period following the 8th Extraordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council held in Havana, Cuba, on June 3, 2016 to present.

Additionally the Chairmen of the Special Committees of the organisation will present reports on the ACS focal areas of Disaster Risk Reduction, Trade Development and External Economic Relations, Transport, Sustainable Tourism and the Council of National Representatives of the Special Fund. In this regard, the Chair will invite Delegates to present their comments on the Reports of the Special Committees and the Special Fund.

A presentation will also be made on two projects borne out of the collaboration between the ACS and Mexico with support from the Government of Chile: the first project, the United Nations initiative on Global Geospatial Information Update Management (UN-GGIM) under the direction of the National Institute of Statistics and Geographic of Mexico (INEGI) is geared towards the development of Spatial Data Infrastructure in nineteen countries in the Caribbean, to strengthen the generation, use and sharing of geospatial information. The second presentation will be made on the advancements of the project "Map of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean", developed by the Republic of Cuba

and executed by the Central American Commission for Maritime Transport (COCATRAM). This project aims to create an updated map of the primary maritime routes that exist within the Greater Caribbean Region."

During the meeting's proceedings, participants will also be updated on the work of the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) provide. The aim of the CSC is to function as the structured mechanism, which works to gain recognition for the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development. In this regard, the Secretariat, will report on the II Symposium of the Caribbean Sea Commission, which will take place in January 2017.

On the topic of administration, the Secretariat will also report on the results of the 33rd and 34th Meetings of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration, held on May 23rd and November 10, 2016 respectively; as well as the outcomes of the Working Group comprised by the Executive Board of the Ministerial, the Secretariat and Mexico.

Another important aspect of the meeting will be the consideration of three new applications for Observer membership.

The 19th Intersessional Preparatory Meeting of the Ministerial Council will also consider the dates and venue for the 22nd Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council and its Preparatory Meeting.

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