

ACS - 27 Years Promoting the Sustainable Development of the Greater Caribbean



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Twenty-seven years after the Association of Caribbean States was founded, the environment and circumstances around the Greater Caribbean have changed drastically, but one constant, the continued need for cooperation, solidarity and concerted action, remains.

In 1994, visionary leaders from around the Caribbean Sea sat together in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia to make decisions to bring the peoples of our countries together to form the Association of Caribbean States. The idea and philosophy that the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean should be a collective effort is perhaps even clearer today than ever before as families, neighbourhoods, national and regional communities and indeed global society combat the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we seek to protect the people of our region it is evident that greater, not less cooperation and solidarity is imperative.. Reviving our economies through enhanced intraregional tourism, trade and transport, in the context of environmental consciousness and inbuilt sustainability, is vital if we are not merely survive, but progress.

We have begun working on our Plan of Action for the next triennium, which will be an important part of stamping the relevance of the ACS on the future of the Greater Caribbean. COVID-19 and its impacts, the environmental crisis and global trade conflicts have converged to expose our vulnerabilities as a region, but it has also awakened a new realisation that managed risk can not only ensure survival, but enhance resilience. Where we go from here will determine how the people of the region recover, retool and rethink lives and livelihoods and buttress a civilisation that has offered the world much, and has much more to offer.

No other mechanism for cooperation in the wider Caribbean envisioned such an expansive call. From the beginning, four regional groups were distinguished: CARICOM, the Group of Three (Colombia, Mexico and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) Central America and the Non-Grouped (Cuba, Dominican Republic and Panamá). The Overseas Territories of France, The Kingdom of the Netherlands, and now Great Britain were embraced as Associate Members. The creation of the ACS represented a strategic opportunity to develop new forms of regional and south south cooperation alongside more traditional north south partnerships. We are driven by successive visionary mandates espoused by Heads of State and Government over the last 27 years and look forward to receiving the new mandate from our Heads at the 10th Heads of State/Government Summit in Mexico next year.

Continuing committed work in service of the people of the Greater Caribbean remains our purpose and we are driven by the ideal of a resilient, sustainably developed and progressive Greater Caribbean capable of sustaining and motivating the aspirations of future generations of our unique people and culture.