ACS Ministers calls for solidarity with Haiti at the 15th Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council



Port of Spain, (January 27, 2010) – Foreign Affairs Ministers and their representatives met in Cartagena, Republic of Colombia on 21-22 January for the 15th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, the Honourable Jaime Bermúdez Merizalde, inaugurated the proceedings on 21 January. ACS Secretary General, Ambassador Luis Fernando Andrade Falla also addressed the meeting at the Opening Ceremony.

The Meeting recognised with profound grief and dismay the events of January 12, 2010 when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the city of Port au Prince, the capital city of the Republic of Haiti and expressed sincere condolences to the People and Government of the Republic of Haiti for the extraordinarily tragic loss of life and injury that occurred.

The ACS Ministerial Council subsequently finalized and approved the "Declaration of Solidarity of the Association of Caribbean States with the Republic of Haiti and Call to Action", which appeals to all ACS Member and Associate States, Observers and Social Partners, as well as the International Community to provide Haiti with the requisite financial and technical support which will assist that country in the medium and long term efforts to achieve reconstruction and sustainable development as well as to assist Haiti in the building of capacity towards self-reliance. The Ministerial Council also instructed the Secretary General to inform the Council of the implementation of this agreement through the meetings of the corresponding subsidiary organs.

Towards the conclusion of the 15th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council, delegates elected the new Executive Boards of the Special Committees and the Chairman & Executive Board of the Ministerial Council. This Meeting therefore marked the end of Colombia's chairmanship of the organisation and the beginning of Nicaragua's role as Chairman of the Ministerial Council for 2010. The Executive Board of the Ministerial Council is also comprised of Cuba and Mexico as Vice Chairmen and Suriname as Rapporteur.

Civil Engineer Eduardo José González Angulo of the Republic of Colombia was also elected as the new Director of Transport & Disaster Risk Reduction at the Secretariat, and will assume the position in June 2010.

The Ministerial Meeting was preceded by a two-day Preparatory session. Among other activities, delegates reviewed the annual reports of the Secretary General, the Chairman of the Ministerial Council and the Chairmen of the Special Committees, Caribbean Sea and Special Fund.

Delegates also discussed the work performed throughout 2009 and the various positions expressed by member countries regarding the strengthening of the Association. Following which, the Ministerial Council agreed to continue the work of the Ad-Hoc Work Group in preparing a proposal aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the ACS

The Ministerial Council is the main organ for policies formulation, and it defines and establishes rules of procedure and guidelines governing the functioning of the Association.