The ACS Brings the Greater Caribbean's Voice to the 2025 HLPF



Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago – July 28, 2025.

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) participated in the 2025 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), held from 14 to 23 July 2025 under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This year's Forum reviewed progress on SDG 3 (health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 14 (conserve and sustainable use the oceans), and SDG 17 (global partnerships for sustainable development) under the theme: "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind."

Throughout the Forum, Secretary-General H.E. Noemí Espinoza Madrid delivered strong messages on behalf of the ACS' 25 Member States and 10 Associate Members, reflecting the priorities of the ACS Strategic Vision 2025–2035. In her plenary intervention at the Ministerial Segment, she underscored a central paradox:

> "Today, we face a paradox: never has the urgency to act been so clear, and never has the multilateral architecture to do so been so fragile".

She called for renewed multilateralism centred on people and planet and stressed that with just five years left to meet the 2030 Agenda targets, "this goes beyond measurements or rankings. It is about people lacking food o healthcare; about women sustaining entire economies invisibly; about young people who migrate because their territories no longer offer a future".
She emphasized that sustainable development will not be possible without dignity and justice.

ACS Priorities at the HLPF

On SDG5, gender equality, the ACS emphasized that it is not only a standalone goal, but the foundation upon which sustainable development rest. The Secretary-General underscored the urgency of treating gender equality as a cross-cutting priority, essential to the success of the entire 2030 Agenda. She also called for recognition of the critical role played by women across the Greater Caribbean, who are leading climate adaptation on coasts, farms, and within their communities, yet remain excluded from decision-making spaces and access to financing. The Secretary-General called for financing that reaches women, public care systems that value their work, and education that equips girls with digital skills and leadership opportunities.

On SDG 14, life below waters, the ACS reaffirmed that protecting the Caribbean Sea is both and environmental imperative and a strategic priority at regional and global levels. The Secretary-General highlighted three key priorities: transforming challenges like sargassum into opportunities, securing the formal designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Zone for Sustainable Development, and placing people at the center of ocean action.

She reiterated that the Greater Caribbean is on the frontline of climate change, social inequalities, and economic vulnerabilities, yet continues to champion multilateralism, resilience, and inclusive development.

For Small Island Developing States (SIDS), she stressed the urgency of fair and accessible financing, support for tools such as the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, and stronger South-South cooperation to improve infrastructure and protect the Caribbean Sea.

In line with SDG 17, global partnerships for sustainable development, the ACS reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening regional and global cooperation through active engagement in official side events. The Secretary-General participated in the FAO especial event dedicated to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI), where she emphasized the urgency of moving beyond short-term aid and toward sustainable investment that promote food sovereignty, resilient local system, and intraregional trade in the Greater Caribbean.

She also took part in side event “Enabling Resilient Journeys” which spotlighted the efforts of the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative (GCCM). There, she highlighter the importance of addressing climate mobility not only as an adaptation strategy, but also as a pathway to dignity, justices and regional planning, essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The ACS-led Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative was presented as a key step to manage displacement with dignity and planning.

She delivered a strong call for climate justice:

> “Those who contributed the least to the climate crisis are suffering its most devastating consequences. Protecting the rights of people on the move is not charity—it is an obligation under the 2030 Agenda.”

Strengthening Partnerships for Regional Solutions

Beyond official sessions, the Forum provided a space to reinforce cooperation with countries and UN partners aligned with ACS priorities.

In a conversation with Mr. Suman Bery, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, the Secretary-General reaffirmed India's longstanding commitment as an Observer of the ACS since 1995 and discussed how this partnership can continue to grow, supporting resilience and sustainable development across the region.

A similar exchange took place with H.E. Abdulaziz bin Nasser Al-Khalifa of Qatar, where the focus was on expanding cooperation within the framework of Qatar's Observer status, particularly in areas that build resilience and promote sustainable growth.
The meeting with Serbia was an opportunity to express gratitude for that country's financial support for the ACS Strategic Plan and to reaffirm the commitment to continue working together.

Engagements with Morocco also highlighted the potential to broaden ties, especially in technical assistance and capacity-building, while a constructive discussion with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) underscored the importance of better coordination in disaster preparedness, anticipatory action, and rapid response throughout the Greater Caribbean.

Finally, the Secretary-General met with Dr. Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, to explore how the ACS and the UN Youth Office can work together to empower young people as key actors in sustainable development, highlighting opportunities for collaboration in advancing youth leadership and participation in the region.

Looking Ahead

By participating in the 2025 HLPF, the ACS reinforced its role as a bridge between the Greater Caribbean and the global community, ensuring that the realities and priorities of its countries and territories remain visible in international decision-making.

As the world enters the final stretch toward 2030, the Association will intensify efforts to build alliances, mobilize resources, and accelerate the implementation of concrete regional initiatives—from climate action and disaster resilience to food security and connectivity.

Through cooperation, solidarity, and results-driven action, the ACS will continue to transform commitments into solutions that protect people, economies, and ecosystems across the Greater Caribbean.