



ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES

STRATEGIC PLAN

GREATER CARIBBEAN 2035

*A SHARED HORIZON: FROM OUR COMMON SEA
TOWARD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING*

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Secretariat of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is honoured to present the *Strategic Plan: Greater Caribbean 2035 – A Shared Horizon from Our Common Sea towards Sustainable Development and Well-being*, together with the *Geopolitical Analysis: Greater Caribbean 2035 – Navigating the Geopolitical Currents, Strategic Foresight and Policy Implications for the ACS*.

This Strategic Plan is the result of an intergovernmental, participatory, and methodologically rigorous process that marks the beginning of a new political and institutional cycle for the Association.

Throughout its preparation, the priorities of our Member States remained the central axis of a collective effort to shape a shared ambition. The High-Level *Meeting "A Decade of Change: Building the Future Together"* represented an unprecedented moment for the ACS and the starting point for these documents. It brought together world-renowned experts, regional universities, the United Nations, the Secretariat's team, and—above all—our Members, reaffirming the conviction that **the future of the Greater Caribbean must be built through cooperation, integration, and renewed political will**.

In a global context marked by profound transformations, overlapping crises, and a fragmented multilateral order, the Greater Caribbean faces the risk of being left behind. Our region—diverse and strategically located—is a natural bridge linking Latin America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Recognising this geopolitical value is both a responsibility and an opportunity to strengthen the Caribbean's presence on the global stage.

The Geopolitical Analysis provides an in-depth understanding of the structural factors, emerging trends, and strategic challenges shaping our region. This diagnostic foundation enabled a coherent and forward-looking institutional roadmap.

The Strategic Plan to 2035 translates this shared vision into concrete objectives, priority outcomes, and implementation pathways. It envisions an ACS that is more useful, visible, and aligned with the needs and aspirations of its Members — capable of articulating integrated responses to common challenges and advancing the leadership of the Greater Caribbean.

At this pivotal moment, we must focus on our strongest bond: **the Caribbean Sea**. More than a geographic concept, it is the living heart of our identity. Its preservation, sustainability, and equitable use embody not only an environmental imperative but also a political vision of cooperation, solidarity, and a common future.

Strengthening the relevance of the ACS is not merely an institutional aspiration; **it is our collective responsibility**. It requires believing in a Greater Caribbean that embraces its diversity, acts with unity, and projects its voice in the global arena. To strengthen the ACS is to ensure our region can shape its future and contribute meaningfully to global well-being and sustainable development.

The ACS Secretariat expresses its sincere appreciation to all Member States, Associate Members, Observers, and strategic partners who contributed to this endeavour with their participation, expertise, and commitment. With the same collective will that guided this process, we are confident that we will advance toward the implementation of this Plan, turning this shared roadmap into **tangible results for the well-being of the peoples of the Greater Caribbean**.



H.E. Noemí Espinoza Madrid
Secretary-General

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) fosters consultation, cooperation, and concerted action to advance sustainable and inclusive development across the Greater Caribbean.

The Member States of the ACS share common aspirations for sustainable development, resilience, and regional integration. Yet they continue to confront interlinked challenges — including high exposure to climate risks, structural inequalities, and widening social disparities — that impede progress toward inclusive and sustainable development. Weakening globalization, erosion of multilateralism, and intensifying geopolitical competition have disrupted trade, investment, and global governance.

For the Greater Caribbean — characterized by a mix of Small Island Developing States and larger, interconnected continental economies — these shifts have deep implications for trade, transport, and external economic relations, exacerbating pre-existing structural challenges and vulnerabilities across the region.

At the same time, the Greater Caribbean holds vast potential for sustainable and inclusive growth. The region's blue economy — rooted in the shared Caribbean Sea, its coasts, and marine resources — offers opportunities to diversify production, generate green and decent jobs, and build resilience against external shocks.

Marine and coastal tourism, fisheries, renewable marine energy, sustainable shipping, and ecosystem restoration can collectively create new value while preserving natural capital. Sustainable tourism, culture, and heritage provide pathways to strengthen local identity, social cohesion, and economic renewal. Strategic investments in these sectors — guided by equity and environmental stewardship — are essential to fostering inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

In this complex context, the ACS is uniquely positioned to convene its diverse Member States and partners around actionable solutions that safeguard regional autonomy, environmental integrity, and sustainable development. Its capacity to foster unity and resilience — amid climate threats and geopolitical volatility — positions it as a vital platform for regional integration and collective action.

The Strategic Plan to 2035 revitalizes the ACS for a new era, sharpening its organizational vision and mission while enhancing coherence, efficiency, and impact. Grounded in the principles of consultation, cooperation, and concerted action, it strengthens the Association's ability to respond effectively to evolving regional and global dynamics, translating vision into measurable results.

Developed through a rigorous and participatory planning process, the Plan provides an integrated, synergistic, and forward-looking framework through which the ACS will address five interrelated Strategic Priorities:

- ***Preservation and Conservation of the Caribbean Sea*** — protecting marine ecosystems, reducing pollution, and promoting sustainable use of resources.
- ***Trade and External Economic Relations*** — strengthening intra-regional and international trade, diversifying exports, and modernizing investment systems to expand market access and global competitiveness.
- ***Risk Reduction with a Climate Justice Approach*** — building equitable disaster risk reduction systems rooted in participatory governance and accountable risk management.
- ***Transport and Connectivity*** — modernizing and integrating transport networks and digital infrastructure to improve efficiency, resilience, and connectivity.
- ***Sustainable Tourism***, — promoting responsible practices for the development of regenerative tourism that protects the environment, safeguards cultural heritage, and empowers communities for inclusive growth.

The Plan defines clear outcomes to be achieved by 2035, supported by targeted interventions, three cross-cutting approaches, and four critical accelerators.

The Plan also outlines how the ACS will strengthen its institutional coherence to become more strategic, adaptive, and accountable — ensuring that the necessary capacities are in place to deliver measurable results and lasting impact.

Implementation will unfold through two successive five-year Implementation Plans, guided by a results and resources framework and a dynamic monitoring and learning process. This ensures adaptability to evolving regional realities and policy needs.

The ACS Strategic Plan to 2035 positions the Organization as a trusted regional mechanism — capable of advancing climate action, sustainable development, and social equity across the Greater Caribbean. It is a call to unity, innovation, and cooperation to ensure a resilient, inclusive future for present and future generations.

Grounded in five mutually reinforcing priorities — *Caribbean Sea, Trade and Economy, Climate Justice, Transport and Connectivity, and Tourism and Heritage* — the Plan provides the architecture through which the ACS will deliver collective impact. Its adoption marks a decisive step toward a more united, resilient, and sustainable Greater Caribbean.

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

1. On July 24, 1994, the *Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)* was signed in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, giving life to a regional organization dedicated to consultation, cooperation, and concerted action among the peoples and governments of the Greater Caribbean.

2. Since then, the ACS has served as the principal platform for political dialogue, cooperation, and coordination among its Member States, Associate Members, and Observers — working to advance sustainable development, trade, transport, and the protection of the Caribbean Sea as the shared heritage of its peoples. Over the past three decades, it has remained a unique bridge between the island and continental nations and territories of the Greater Caribbean.

3. Today, the region faces a vastly more complex landscape — marked by climate change, geopolitical uncertainty, social inequality, and rapid technological transformation. In this context, Member States have recognized the need for a more resilient, inclusive, and future-ready ACS — one capable of adapting to emerging challenges while safeguarding the principles of unity and cooperation. The Antigua (2023) and Montería (2025) Declarations call for the *revitalization, strengthening, and modernization* of the ACS to better serve its Member States and peoples.

4. The Strategic Plan to 2035 renews and strengthens the ACS for a new era — realigning priorities, updating capacities, and consolidating its organizational vision and mission to enhance coherence, efficiency, and impact.

5. Developed through a participatory process, the Plan provides an integrated and forward-looking framework through which the ACS will address five interrelated Strategic Priorities: *Preservation and Conservation of the Caribbean Sea; Trade and External Economic Relations; Risk Reduction with a Climate Justice Approach; Transport and Connectivity; and Sustainable Tourism, Culture and Heritage*. The corresponding

Outcomes and Interventions are complemented by cross-cutting approaches and accelerators that are fundamental to the achievement of all results.

6. The Plan also outlines how the ACS will strengthen its institutional coherence to become more strategic, adaptive, and accountable — ensuring that the Secretariat has the capacities and systems needed to deliver measurable results and lasting impact.

7. Underpinning every aspect of this Strategic Plan is the conviction that the development of the Greater Caribbean must be people-centred, promoting an inclusive and equitable model focused on the well-being of its peoples. The Plan positions the ACS as a trusted regional mechanism capable of advancing sustainable development, climate action, and social equity across the Greater Caribbean.

1.2 Participatory Strategic Planning Process

8. The Strategic Plan is grounded in an inclusive and iterative process of consultation led by the ACS Secretariat under the guidance of its Member States and Associate Members. It also reflects the substantial participation of the ACS staff, whose engagement ensured institutional ownership and coherence throughout the process. The Plan also draws on insights from technical experts, partner institutions and regional and international organizations, whose contributions have enriched the process with valuable perspectives, data, evidence, and institutional experience.

9. This collaborative process ensures that the Strategic Plan reflects the diversity of voices, priorities and regional realities that define the Greater Caribbean. It also guarantees that the five Strategic Outcomes integrate approved priorities and commitments into a coherent, synergistic, and forward-looking framework — aligned with the evolving needs of the region and positioning the ACS to act with renewed clarity, purpose, and collective ownership.

1.3 Context

10. The Greater Caribbean encompasses the insular Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Suriname y Guyana — a vast, interconnected region that is both maritime and continental in character. Together, these nations share a common patrimony: the Caribbean Sea, covering approximately 4.3 million km² and sustaining trade, biodiversity, and livelihoods across borders. Comprised of 25 Member States and 10 Associate Members, and home to peoples of Indigenous, African, Asian, and European heritage, the region is marked by profound geographic, cultural, economic, and environmental diversity.

11. The Member States of the Association of Caribbean States share common aspirations for sustainable development, resilience, and regional integration. They also face interconnected challenges — including high exposure to climate risks, structural inequalities, and widening social disparities — that continue to impede progress towards inclusive sustainable development.

12. The current international setting, marked by weakening globalization, the erosion of multilateralism, and intensifying geopolitical competition, has disrupted trade, investment, and the global governance system. Developing countries face record debt-service burdens and a contraction in global trade volumes.

13. Global trade tensions — including the increased use of sanctions, tariffs, and export controls as instruments of economic policy — have further heightened volatility for the open, interconnected economies of the Greater Caribbean. For a region characterized by a mix of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and continental economies, these shifts carry deep implications for economic growth, transportation, and external economic relations.

14. These global dynamics exacerbate long-standing structural challenges and vulnerabilities in the region. Across much of the insular Caribbean and coastal areas, an estimated one in three people still lives below national poverty lines, and income inequality remains among the highest in the world. Average public debt across the region remains near 70 per cent of GDP, while informality affects over half of the workforce, constraining fiscal space and productivity. Limited diversification, high debt, and tight fiscal margins restrict public investment in infrastructure, education, and social protection.

15. Challenges in food security and dependence on imports persist in many parts of the region, with some countries relying on imports for 80% to 90% of their total consumption. Dependence on imported fossil fuels further constrains fiscal space and sustainability, despite the region's abundant potential in solar, wind, geothermal, and ocean energy.

16. Situated in the Atlantic Basin, the Caribbean is highly vulnerable to climate threats. The region's high exposure to sea-level rise and extreme weather events — hurricanes, droughts, and floods — affects coastal livelihoods, water systems, infrastructure, and food security.

17. Over the past two decades, climate-related disasters have caused losses exceeding USD 100 billion, while hurricane intensity has risen by nearly 25 per cent. Sea-level rise, coral bleaching, drought, and sargassum proliferation endanger livelihoods and

ecosystems. Average annual losses from natural disasters are estimated at 2–3 per cent of GDP in small island and coastal economies, while in some Small Island Developing States, the impacts of major climate events have resulted in significantly higher economic losses and, in certain cases, negative GDP growth, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Climate-related shocks disproportionately impact people with intersecting vulnerabilities. These realities underscore the urgency of climate justice and differentiated responsibility in safeguarding the Caribbean Sea and its peoples.

18. Persistent gender gaps continue to constrain the full development potential of the Greater Caribbean. Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment, informality, unpaid care responsibilities, and gender-based violence. They also face persistent barriers to accessing financial systems, digital technologies, and decision-making spaces.

19. Climate risks and widening social disparities directly affect the lives, health, and economic opportunities of women and girls. Intersectional discrimination further exacerbates these challenges. People of African descent; Indigenous peoples; migrant women and girls; persons with disabilities, and those living in poverty face overlapping forms of exclusion that heighten vulnerability across all sectors. Addressing these intersecting inequities through gender-responsive, inclusive, and rights-based policies remains central to the ACS's commitment to leave no one behind and ensure that recovery and resilience are equitable.

20. Human mobility in the Greater Caribbean is driven by complex socio-economic, environmental, and political factors, encompassing both historical and contemporary patterns such as labour migration, intra-regional movements, and displacement due to climate change and conflict. While remittances sustain many households in the region, rising xenophobia and migration pressures in some destination countries continue to challenge social cohesion and human dignity.

21. The region is experiencing a demographic shift marked by declining fertility and ageing populations. By 2050, the median age of the population will increase to 40 years. This transition needs to be considered across different development sectors, particularly in relation to social protection, health, and the realization of the right to decent work and economic security for all generations.

22. Rapid technological change is also reshaping economies and societies. Yet uneven access to digital infrastructure, innovation systems, and cybersecurity capacity risks widening divides and creating new dependencies. Strengthening regional cooperation on digital connectivity, cybersecurity, and digital skills will be vital to ensure inclusive

participation in the digital and green economies of the future, helping to narrow existing inequalities and prevent the widening of social and economic gaps.

23. Weak institutional capacity for data collection, analysis, and integration — combined with fragmented digital infrastructure — contributes to a “results gap” between policy intent and tangible outcomes. The region faces persistent gaps in the availability, accessibility, and use of reliable, timely, and disaggregated data, including data that is not always fit for policy and decision-making purposes. These limitations hinder the design, implementation, and evaluation of effective public policies, and constrain the region’s ability to monitor progress, compare outcomes, and respond to emerging challenges. There is a need for increased investment in national statistical systems focused on maritime issues and advances in scientific research, technological development, and innovation, regional observatories, tertiary-level educational institutions, and innovation-driven knowledge hubs that integrate environmental, economic, and social data.

24. At the same time, the Greater Caribbean holds vast potential for sustainable and inclusive growth. The region’s blue economy — rooted in the shared Caribbean Sea, its coasts, and marine resources — offers opportunities to diversify production, generate green jobs, and build resilience against external shocks. Marine and coastal tourism, fisheries, renewable marine energy, sustainable shipping, and ecosystem restoration can collectively create new value while preserving natural capital.

25. Beyond the blue economy, sustainable tourism, culture, and heritage remain vital pillars of inclusive growth, offering pathways to diversify income, strengthen local identity, and generate employment while conserving natural and cultural assets. In this context, the region’s vibrant orange economy — including creative and cultural industries such as music, design, film, and the arts — plays an increasingly important role as a driver of innovation, youth opportunity, and economic dynamism across the Greater Caribbean. The continued recovery and transformation of these sectors, guided by sustainability principles, will be key to the region’s economic renewal.

26. As oceans re-emerge as strategic frontiers, the Caribbean Sea’s geopolitical and economic importance is intensifying — underscoring the need to preserve it as a Zone of Peace¹, connectivity, and collective wellbeing. The protection and sustainable governance of this maritime space are environmental and strategic imperatives for the region’s stability and future development.

¹ The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago’s reservation on this language is noted.

27. In this context, ongoing discussions within international and multilateral forums on the reform of the climate finance architecture have underscored the urgent need for more accessible, affordable, and predictable financing for climate-vulnerable regions. These discussions highlight the systemic barriers faced by Small Island Developing States and coastal nations — reinforcing the importance of regional cooperation and strengthened collective advocacy across the Greater Caribbean.

28. Amid these global tensions, the ACS offers a neutral, action-oriented platform capable of bridging divides and advancing pragmatic cooperation for collective action. As such, the Association of Caribbean States is uniquely positioned to serve as a stabilizing force for the Greater Caribbean — leveraging geographic proximity, common patrimonies, shared interests, and a legacy of concerted action to foster resilience and unity. In the face of intensifying environmental threats and mounting geopolitical pressures, its capacity to convene diverse Member States around actionable solutions will be essential to safeguarding regional autonomy, environmental integrity, and sustainable development.

1.4: Analysis of Policy Implications for the ACS

29. The Strategic Plan to 2035 has benefited from a dynamic and forward-looking analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing the ACS in a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape. Entitled *The Greater Caribbean 2025–2035: Navigating Geopolitical Cross Currents*, this analysis provides the following strategic foresights and policy implications for the ACS:

Key Challenges and Opportunities

The ACS will navigate a complex and shifting geopolitical landscape as the international system enters a new era of uncertainty, heightened risks, and fragmentation. The next decade will present both strategic challenges and emerging opportunities.

- a) The contraction of global development financing poses a critical constraint for the Greater Caribbean. The refocusing of political and financial attention could jeopardise the progress achieved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- b) Intensifying scepticism towards multilateralism and the retreat of key stakeholders from collective institution-building hampers coordinated action on transnational threats, ranging from climate change and trafficking to sudden shifts in migration patterns.

- c) The evolving geopolitical landscape presents opportunities to rethink regional cooperation. Fragmented approaches are insufficient to address systemic, shared challenges such as climate change and the proliferation of sargassum. The ACS is well positioned to provide a neutral and inclusive platform for data sharing, coordinated action, joint programming, and the mobilization of shared resources.
- d) As climate-related threats intensify including those of marine and terrestrial origin (both natural and anthropogenic), demand is growing for targeted, scalable, and regionally driven initiatives grounded in scientific evidence for decision-making. The Greater Caribbean must play a proactive role in shaping the solutions it needs — defining priorities, guiding approaches, and coordinating regional action — while strategically mobilizing international financing, partnerships, and technical expertise to support implementation of its own climate and resilience agenda. In this context, the ACS is well positioned to serve as a convening platform and integrative mechanism to facilitate and advance regionally driven solutions.

Recommendations

The relevance of the ACS and its mission is more imperative than ever. To meet the demands of this era, the ACS must enhance its institutional and operational capacity and position itself as a results-oriented convener, coordinator, and integrator of regional solutions. Its ability to catalyse collective outcomes — through partnership platforms, policy coherence, and coordinated implementation — will define its leadership and regional value in the years ahead.

- a) It is essential to pursue new and alternative funding sources. The Greater Caribbean now has an opportunity to position itself as a strategic partner in global transformation. With the right narrative and approach, the ACS leadership can invite emerging donors to invest in high impact projects that reflect shared values and mutual benefit – particularly in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable tourism, maritime infrastructure, and climate change adaptation.
- b) The global rise of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investment creates incentives for philanthropic foundations and private sector engagement in sustainable development. The ACS must position itself as a broker between regional priorities and ESG-aligned capital, in sectors such as clean energy, climate adaptation, and the blue economy. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and blended finance models can be powerful tools to mitigate investment risk and leverage private capital for regional benefit.

- c) The ACS must showcase itself as a credible partner for these actors by strengthening its project pipeline and improving its fundraising mechanisms. Cultivating diplomatic and project-based relationships with these partners can open new streams of funding.
- d) The adoption of innovative financing solutions will be essential. The ACS can help search for alternative capital for sustainable development in key policy areas, such as climate resilience bonds, debt for nature or debt for climate swaps, carbon credits, and insurance mechanisms for resilience.
- e) Technical partnerships with major international cooperation agencies and NGOs provide a practical way to enhance project design, knowledge exchange, and implementation capacity. Many are shifting toward long-term, partnership-based programming in regions facing climate and social vulnerability. Collaboration offers critical expertise and innovation beyond in-house capacity. By formalizing strategic alliances and reinforcing Technical Working Groups (TWGs), the ACS can expand the impact of regional initiatives while maintaining ownership, national alignment, and a strong delivery focus.
- f) Additionally, the ACS should strengthen direct collaboration with a broader range of stakeholders — including Ministries of Economy and technical ministries linked to the Association’s priorities. Demand-driven projects require agile data collection with beneficiaries. Strategic alignment with national development plans and the 2030 Agenda will be key to attracting support and building legitimacy.
- g) The ACS Secretariat must attract and retain the best possible talent. A diverse and highly qualified team strengthens understanding of national priorities and regional dynamics.
- h) Unilateral coercive measures affecting some Members continue to generate broader economic and social impacts. While directed at individual States, their effects extend across the region, influencing cooperation dynamics and limiting the capacity of affected Members to engage fully in collective initiatives. Acknowledging these wider implications is important for advancing dialogue, fostering solidarity, and supporting coordinated responses within a multilateral framework.

These recommendations have informed the development of the Strategic Plan. They have been considered in the prioritization process, and they are embedded across the Interventions, Accelerators and Enablers.

2. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

2.1 Mandate, Vision and Mission

Mandate

30. The mandate of the Association of Caribbean States — as enshrined in its 1994 founding Convention — is “*to promote consultation, cooperation, and concerted action*” among its Member States and Associate Members, as set out in Article III (Nature, Purposes and Functions) of the Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States. The ACS serves as a unifying platform for dialogue and regional collaboration, bringing together island and continental States and territories to address shared challenges and advance collective solutions in the preservation of the Caribbean Sea, trade and economic integration, transport, sustainable tourism, and disaster risk reduction. By leveraging the region’s geographic proximity, historical ties, and shared aspirations, the ACS strengthens regional unity, enhances resilience, and boosts collective competitiveness — laying the groundwork for a sustainable, inclusive, and interconnected Greater Caribbean by 2035.

Vision

31. A united, sustainable, and resilient Greater Caribbean, strengthened by solid connections among its member countries, safeguarding our shared sea, empowering its people in a peaceful environment, valuing its communities, and leveraging global challenges to achieve inclusive and solidarity-based development.

Mission

32. The Association of Caribbean States (ACS), through consultation, cooperation and concerted action, fosters effective and efficient integration among its Member States and Territories. It harnesses the collective wisdom and unique capabilities of the Greater Caribbean to shape bold, transformative solutions for sustainable development—strengthening communities, protecting our shared sea, and building a future of well-being for people and planet.

2.2 Guiding Principles

33. The work of the Association of Caribbean States is guided by three foundational principles — consultation, cooperation, and concerted action. Rooted in the organization’s founding mandate, these principles form the strategic core of how the ACS engages, operates, and delivers results. The ACS engages through consultation and dialogue, operates through cooperation and partnership, and achieves results through concerted action. Together, they are central to advancing unity, resilience, and sustainable development across the Greater Caribbean, and to strengthening the region’s collective voice in global forums.

34. The ACS’s work is also grounded in a set of core human, social, environmental, and governance principles that guide all dimensions of the Strategic Plan: *Human rights and dignity; Unity in diversity and interculturality; Solidarity and common but differentiated responsibility; Self-determination, sovereignty and neutrality; Social justice and equality; Climate resilience and sustainability; and Transparency and accountability.*

35. These principles are embedded across the Strategic Plan and are fundamental to ensuring that the development model in the Greater Caribbean remains people-centred, inclusive, sustainable and equitable. They are reflected throughout all dimensions of the Plan and are primarily implemented through the cross-cutting approaches that underpin every outcome and intervention.

2.3 Strategic Priorities and Rationale

36. The five interrelated Strategic Priorities of the ACS address the core ecological, economic, and social challenges facing the Member States. Together, they form a coherent pathway for collective action that strengthens resilience, fosters sustainable development, and advances the shared vision of a united Greater Caribbean, grounded in human dignity, wellbeing, and sustainability:

- *Preservation and Conservation of the Caribbean Sea*
- *Trade and External Economic Relations*
- *Risk Reduction with a Climate Justice Approach*
- *Transport and Connectivity*
- *Sustainable Tourism, Culture and Heritage*

Strategic Priority 1: Preservation and Conservation of the Caribbean Sea

37. The Caribbean Sea is the Greater Caribbean’s most vital common good — an ecological treasure, an economic driver, and a unifying element for the region’s peoples, cultures, and identities. It sustains biodiversity, supports food security, underpins livelihoods, powers tourism and trade, and embodies the shared patrimony of present and future generations. Beyond its regional significance, the Caribbean Sea is also a global asset — a regulator of the Earth’s climate, a reservoir of biodiversity, and a critical space for international maritime connectivity. It provides irreplaceable ecosystem services, including carbon storage, coastal protection, and marine genetic resources.

38. Yet it remains one of the world’s most fragile and threatened large marine ecosystems. Rising sea levels, ocean acidification, stronger hurricanes, sargassum influxes, plastic and hazardous waste, and habitat destruction threaten both ecosystems and human survival — particularly for Small Island Developing States and low-lying coastal nations, which face disproportionate risks. Left unmanaged, these pressures damage coral reefs, weaken mangroves, deplete oxygen in coastal waters, disrupt fisheries, affect tourism, and harm coastal communities. Fragmented governance, overlapping jurisdictions, and limited financial and technical capacities further jeopardize resilience and sustainable development.

39. Preserving and conserving the Caribbean Sea is essential not only to protect marine ecosystems — coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, and beaches — but also to secure livelihoods, strengthen climate adaptation, and sustain cultural and economic sovereignty. Its sustainable governance is a matter of global concern, contributing to the health of the planet’s oceans and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Its sustainable governance is directly linked to SDG 14 (Life Below Water) while reinforcing progress toward climate action, zero hunger, and reduced inequalities. By prioritizing preservation and conservation of the Caribbean Sea, the ACS will catalyse collective action and foster regional solidarity to ensure the well-being of present and future generations, incorporating integrated coastal and marine destination management approaches that take into account carrying capacity, the regulation of tourist flows, and environmental impact management. The ACS will articulate and frame regional efforts on biodiversity within the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, an international instrument adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

Strategic Priority 2: Trade and External Economic Relations

40. Trade is a powerful engine of sustainable development, yet in the Greater Caribbean its full potential remains constrained by structural vulnerabilities. Fragmented markets, narrow productive bases, and limited export diversification expose the region to external shocks, rising debt, and escalating climate risks. To overcome these challenges, the region

must strengthen intra-regional trade, build resilient value chains, and deepen its integration into global markets. These shifts are essential to unlock economies of scale, enhance competitiveness, and foster a more self-reliant regional economy that generates decent work and broadens inclusive opportunities.

41. Embedding social and environmental priorities into trade policy is also critical but translating them into coherent national strategies remains difficult. At the same time, digital transformation offers a powerful opportunity to overcome structural barriers — empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME), driving innovation, and expanding equitable access to regional and global markets. The ACS’s focus on trade and economic relations will help Member States to create a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable economic landscape for the region.

Strategic Priority 3: Risk Reduction with a Climate Justice Approach

42. Disaster risk management (DRM) is central to protecting lives, livelihoods, and economies across the Greater Caribbean. The frequency and severity of climate-related shocks — hurricanes, floods, and droughts — are rising, driving economic losses, displacement, and the erosion of development gains. Climate change, inequality, unplanned urbanization, and environmental degradation are creating complex, interconnected risks that disproportionately affect vulnerable communities. Those with limited assets and weak access to finance, social protection, and resilient infrastructure face repeated loss, and mounting debt that undermine recovery and resilience.

43. This landscape demands a shift from reactive responses to proactive, inclusive, risk-informed development and grounded in risk management. Building resilience is not only about protecting physical assets — it is about safeguarding development progress, social cohesion, and community well-being. It requires integrating local and traditional knowledge with science-based solutions, strengthening access to and use of high-quality risk data for climate-smart decision-making, and ensuring that policies and actions are grounded in the principles of climate justice and equality.

44. By prioritizing risk reduction with a climate justice approach, the ACS will champion a people-centred approach that leaves no one behind, strengthens the region’s collective resilience, and supports progress toward the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Strategic Priority 4: Transport and Connectivity

45. Robust transport systems — including infrastructure, fleets, and logistics — facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services. Reliable, resilient, and efficient transport

and connectivity are critical for economic activity, inclusive growth, regional integration, and climate resilience. However, the Greater Caribbean's transport and connectivity networks are currently fragmented, outdated, and costly.

46. Connectivity via air, maritime, and digital corridors determines the region's accessibility, affordability, and competitiveness, directly impacting trade, tourism, and social mobility across diverse island and coastal territories. Non-interoperable systems, limited routes, and insufficient maintenance contribute to increased transit times and restrict market access, especially for smaller and more isolated island economies. Climate-related disruptions further expose infrastructure weaknesses, while weak digital integration and poor data exchange hinder real-time coordination and efficiency further limiting the potential of air and maritime connectivity as an enabler of tourism and the development of multi-destination strategies that enhance regional competitiveness.

47. The modernization and integration of transport and connectivity networks are fundamental for long-term development and sustainability in the Greater Caribbean, particularly the modernization of port systems, the digitalization of processes, and the adoption of international standards that facilitate trade. The positioning of transport and connectivity as public goods that unite markets, strengthen resilience, and ensure equitable access is therefore a strategic priority for the ACS.

48. As part of the Global South, the Greater Caribbean occupies a strategic position in advancing a more balanced and cooperative international system. Strengthening transport and connectivity within the region — and with other regions of the Global South — enhances South–South collaboration, diversifies economic relations, and reinforces shared resilience in the face of global disruptions. In this context, the Greater Caribbean can serve as a bridge between continents, fostering innovation, solidarity, and sustainable development across the Global South.

Strategic Priority 5: Sustainable Tourism, Culture and Heritage

49. Tourism is one of the Greater Caribbean's most vital pillars, yet its future depends on sustainability. When managed responsibly, it protects ecosystems, builds resilience, and creates decent work and inclusive economic opportunities. The region's rich cultural and natural diversity enhances its appeal, offering authentic experiences that strengthen Caribbean identity and belonging. Sustainable tourism supports local economies, food security, and the shift toward greener, more resilient development models. However, the sector remains highly vulnerable to climate change, environmental degradation, geopolitical tensions, and market volatility, underscoring the importance of diversifying tourism source markets and engaging non-traditional and emerging markets to strengthen sectoral resilience.

50. The Greater Caribbean’s cultural and heritage wealth is not only an economic asset but a living expression of its peoples’ identities, histories, and creativity. Placing culture and heritage at the heart of tourism strategies ensures respect for diversity, advances human rights, and empowers communities as custodians of their own stories strengthening their transformation into sustainable tourism products, including thematic routes and community-based tourism models that integrate local communities into the value chain. Prioritizing the inclusion and leadership of women, youth, Indigenous peoples, people of African descent, and rural populations is essential to ensure that tourism contributes to dignity, equality, and collective wellbeing — reinforcing the Caribbean’s identity as a space of encounter, resilience, and belonging, while also promoting the integration of the creative economy — including gastronomy, crafts, and cultural industries — into the Greater Caribbean’s tourism offering.

51. Strengthening sustainable tourism also requires transforming business ecosystems to make them more equitable, innovative, and locally rooted. Supporting entrepreneurs and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises — particularly those led by women and youth — can drive regeneration, creativity, and community wealth. Inclusive and responsible business models ensure that the benefits of tourism remain within communities, protect the natural and cultural environments on which the sector depends, and foster a fairer and more resilient regional economy.

52. As a regional convener, the ACS will promote this transformation by embedding sustainability, equity, and cultural preservation across tourism policies, investment frameworks, and destination management systems — ensuring that tourism becomes a driver of dignity, identity, and wellbeing for all peoples of the Greater Caribbean.

3. THEORY OF CHANGE

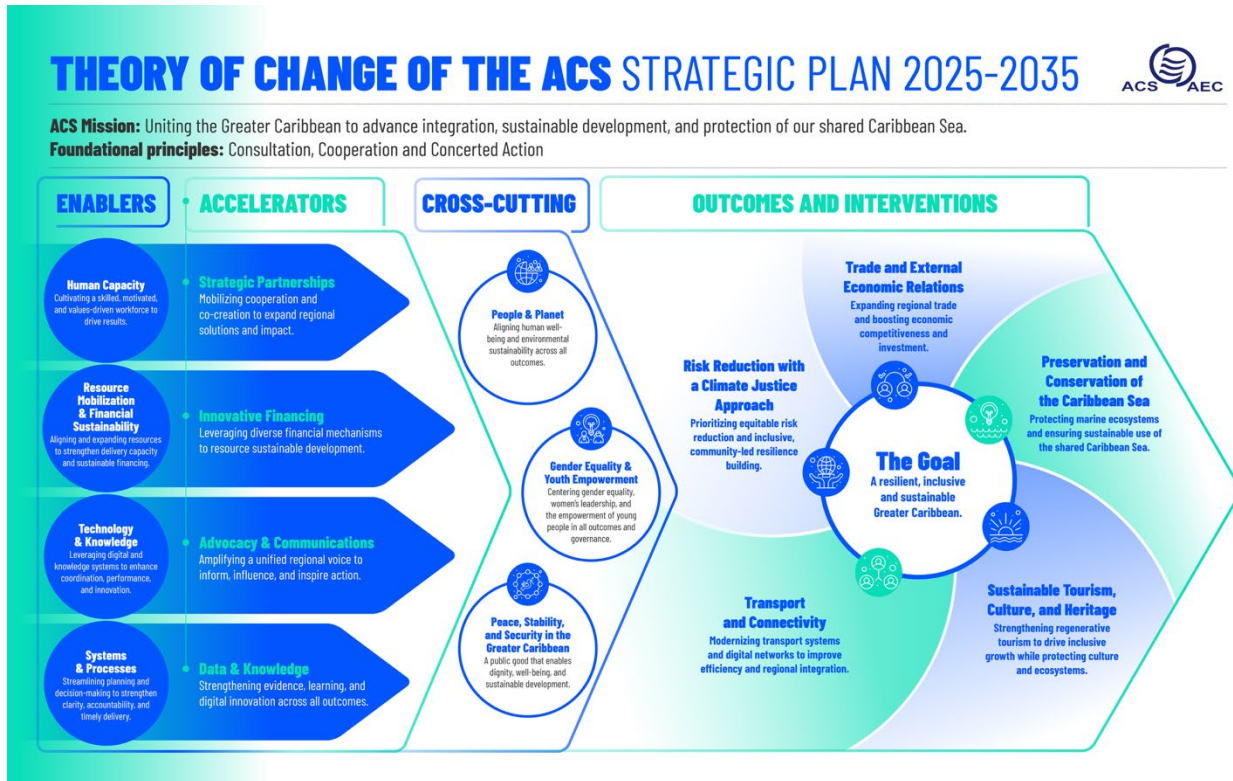


Fig. 1 - ACS Strategic Plan to 2035: Structure - Open High Resolution Graphic

53. By 2035, the Association of Caribbean States will have reinforced the foundations of resilience, inclusion, and sustainable development across the Greater Caribbean. Through its unique mandate and geographic reach, the ACS is positioned to catalyze collective action and deliver solutions that respond to evolving needs across the region.

54. The Theory of Change guiding this Strategic Plan explains how the ACS translates its mandate into catalytic effects that contribute to lasting change. It presents a coherent logic of change—grounded in consultation, cooperation, and concerted action—that links Enablers, Accelerators, Cross Cutting Commitments, and targeted Interventions to enduring Outcomes.

55. Through this integrated framework, the ACS advances a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Greater Caribbean, where collaboration drives progress and shared action leads to long-term transformation.

4. OUTCOMES AND INTERVENTIONS

4.1 Five Integrated Outcomes

56. The Strategic Plan establishes an integrated and forward-looking framework through which the ACS will deliver *five mutually reinforcing Strategic Outcomes*. Together, they chart the path toward a more connected, resilient, and sustainable Greater Caribbean — protecting the Caribbean Sea, strengthening trade and connectivity, advancing climate justice, and promoting sustainable tourism, culture, and heritage. These Outcomes align regional priorities with global commitments and embody the ACS’s vision of *inclusive and sustainable development*— transforming collective ambition into measurable impact for the peoples and ecosystems of the region.

4.2 Outcomes and Interventions

Outcome 1: Preservation and Conservation of the Caribbean Sea.

By 2035, the Caribbean Sea will be preserved and conserved through restored ecosystems, reduced pollution, sustainable use of marine resources, and the strengthening of coastal communities.

57. To advance Outcome 1, the ACS will catalyse collective regional action for operationalization of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area for Sustainable Development (SASD), facilitating policy dialogue, mobilizing resources, promoting scientific cooperation, and amplifying the region’s voice in global fora. Through the Caribbean Sea Commission, the ACS will strengthen governance, partnerships, and financing mechanisms to safeguard this shared patrimony as a source of resilience, shared well-being, and unity for present and future generations.

This will be achieved through four main interventions as follows:

Intervention 1.1: Governance and Special Area Designation

58. Facilitate the operationalization of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area for Sustainable Development by promoting an integrated governance architecture that aligns national, regional and international legal provisions, enhances coordination, and strengthens shared but differentiated accountability for balanced preservation, conservation, and sustainable use.

59. The ACS will promote the strengthening of the legal dimension of the governance of the Caribbean Sea through the reactivation and revitalisation of the Legal Sub-Commission within the framework of the Caribbean Sea Commission. This body will facilitate technical exchange among Member States, support the follow-up of relevant international legal frameworks, and contribute to greater coherence in their interpretation and application, in relation to the preservation, conservation, and sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea, in full respect of the sovereignty of Member States.

60. The ACS will lead the implementation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area for Sustainable Development in alignment with the UN Ocean Conference and the International Maritime Organization Strategy for the Decarbonization of Maritime Transport. Through this framework, The ACS will guide Member States in translating high-level commitments into concrete regional action to preserve, conserve, and ensure the sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea over the next decade. As the sole regional body mandated to promote consultation, cooperation, and concerted action for the Caribbean Sea, the ACS will foster dialogue, mobilize partnerships, and enable collective initiatives that keep the Sea a lasting source of resilience, sustainability, and shared identity for the peoples of the Greater Caribbean.

61. Together with Member States, the ACS will advance the operationalization of the Special Area for Sustainable Development of the Caribbean Sea (SASD), promoting policy harmonization and strengthened cooperation that balances preservation, conservation, and sustainable use. Actions will focus on strengthening institutional alignment, facilitating regional consultations and policy dialogue, enhancing information sharing, and promoting cohesive decision-making for the sustainable management of renewable marine and coastal resources. The ACS will also coordinate with Member States to strengthen regional monitoring and the submission of biennial reports to the United Nations General Assembly.

62. The ACS will also promote concerted action between governments, universities, research institutions, and regional partners to support training programs and applied research to strengthen expertise and capacity in sustainable marine governance in areas such as marine spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management, emergency response, environmental protection, and food security.

Intervention 1.2: Preservation of Fragile Ecosystems and Biodiversity

63. Foster regional cooperation and investment to restore and reconnect critical ecosystems, safeguard biodiversity, and promote community-based stewardship of ecosystems. Support joint initiatives that position the Greater

Caribbean as a global model for integrated, people-centred ecosystem management.

64. The ACS will work with Member States to scale up ecosystem preservation, restoration, and connectivity as both an ecological necessity and a development opportunity. It will strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms to enhance conservation planning, promote nature-based and ecosystem-based adaptation, and facilitate access to biodiversity and climate finance through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and other blended mechanisms. The ACS will connect regional efforts to global initiatives such as the Mangrove Breakthrough and the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, promoting coordinated implementation across the Greater Caribbean.

65. The ACS will promote community stewardship and community participation models that empower local communities, including Indigenous peoples and people of African descent, to lead and benefit from restoration and conservation initiatives, recognizing that the protection of ecosystems begins with the people who depend on them. By advancing adaptive management, regenerative tourism models, blue-carbon restoration, and community-led livelihoods, the ACS will help transform fragile ecosystems into pillars of resilience, food security, and inclusive development — positioning the Greater Caribbean as a model for integrated, people-centred ecosystem management.

Intervention 1.3: Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources

66. Promote the transition toward a sustainable and inclusive blue economy by encouraging innovation, resource-conscious governance, and responsible marine industries that align conservation objectives with economic diversification and resilient livelihoods.

67. The ACS will work with Member States to advance a sustainable and inclusive blue economy transition, integrating conservation, innovation, and equitable resource use as a part of a long-term strategy to strengthen regional resilience, food security, and economic sovereignty. It will also promote, as appropriate, coordination with regional organisations specialised in fisheries and the sustainable management of marine resources, in accordance with their respective mandates.

68. The ACS will foster investment and cooperation in initiatives that protect and restore critical ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs, recognizing their role in supporting biodiversity, livelihoods, and coastal resilience. Strategic partnerships with development banks, regional organizations, and the private sector will be pursued to scale up innovation, capacity-building, and financing for blue-economy solutions. To enhance

coordination, the ACS will continue strengthening the Sargassum Sub-Commission as a platform to align science, policy, and innovation in addressing the environmental, social, and economic impacts of recurring sargassum influxes.

69. The ACS will translate global blue-economy principles into concrete community-level opportunities, empowering coastal populations — particularly women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and people of African descent — to participate in and benefit from the sustainable use of marine resources. Through this approach, the ACS will help ensure that the Caribbean Sea remains a source of well-being, identity, and a responsibility for all, driving inclusive development and regional resilience for present and future generations.

Intervention 1.4: Pollution and Waste Management for a Healthy Caribbean Sea

70. Catalyse the development of a regional framework for pollution prevention, circular waste management, and marine remediation — working with Member States, regional institutions, and partners to promote policy coherence and collective action toward measurable reductions in marine and land-based pollution, including the strengthening of regional monitoring systems and mechanisms that promote environmental accountability.

71. The ACS will work with Member States to advance a regional approach to pollution prevention, waste management, and remediation, fostering policy coherence, innovation, and joint action. It will promote coordinated efforts to reduce plastics and microplastics, improve solid and hazardous waste management, and encourage sustainable production and consumption practices. By mobilizing innovation, technology exchange, and circular-economy solutions through partnerships with development banks, the private sector, and civil society, the ACS will help countries transition toward cleaner, more resilient economies.

72. The ACS will also promote capacity development, data-sharing, and environmental education to strengthen national and regional systems for pollution control and waste reduction. By integrating pollution management into the broader agenda of climate resilience, public health, and the blue economy, the ACS will contribute to restoring the integrity of the Caribbean Sea, ensuring that all its peoples enjoy the benefits of a healthy, productive, and pollution-free environment.

Outcome 2: Trade and External Economic Relations

By 2035, the Greater Caribbean will achieve deeper integration, greater resilience, and global competitiveness through strengthened trade, diversified exports, and modernized investment systems.

73. To advance Outcome 2, the ACS will act as a catalyst for trade cooperation, investment mobilization, and policy innovation — fostering consultation, cooperation, and concerted action among Member States and partners. Through its convening power and coordination platforms, the ACS will strengthen dialogue on trade and investment policies, promote data-driven decision-making, and enhance synergies across regional institutions and financing mechanisms, including tourism as a strategic component of trade in services and as a driver for attracting investment.

74. By building bridges between governments, private-sector actors, and development partners, the ACS will help mobilize resources, unlock opportunities for MSMEs and entrepreneurs, and promote inclusive, sustainable growth. Through these efforts, the ACS will position trade and external economic relations as a driver of regional integration, resilience, and shared well-being across the Greater Caribbean.

This will be achieved through four main interventions as follows:

Intervention 2.1: Data-Driven Trade and Policy Integration

75. Foster a regional data and policy ecosystem that supports evidence-based trade and investment decision-making. Facilitate institutional cooperation to generate reliable, comparable data and analytics that guide sustainable growth strategies, enhance policy coherence, and align trade with environmental and social priorities.

76. The ACS will foster regional cooperation to strengthen data ecosystems that enable forward-looking, risk-informed trade and investment strategies grounded in evidence, sustainability, and inclusion. In partnership with Member States and institutions such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the ACS will advance joint work on trade statistics, value-chain mapping, and climate-risk

analysis. These efforts will support governments in designing smarter, evidence-based policies that enhance competitiveness and resilience.

77. By closing structural data gaps and aligning trade priorities with climate and employment goals, this approach will enhance the region's competitiveness and resilience while advancing the full, effective, and timely implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

78. These efforts will inform trade-facilitation measures — simplified procedures, harmonized standards, and digital border systems — grounded in regional benchmarks and best practices. By embedding robust evidence into policy and planning, the ACS will help ensure that trade integration explicitly supports sustainable development — advancing decent work, climate action, and resilience while building a more opportunity-rich regional economy for all people.

Intervention 2.2: Trade Facilitation and Enabling Environment

79. Facilitate the modernization and harmonization of trade systems through shared standards, digital tools, and transparent regulatory frameworks. Promote coordinated action among customs, transport, and private-sector partners to reduce transaction costs, accelerate transnational flows, and enhance regional competitiveness.

80. The ACS will promote regional coordination and dialogue to strengthen transparent regulatory frameworks, streamline border procedures, and modernize investment systems, making trade in the Greater Caribbean more efficient, predictable, and cost-effective. By addressing fragmented processes and regulatory bottlenecks, this initiative will enhance competitiveness and enable Caribbean economies to capture greater value from regional and global trade flows.

81. The ACS will work with Member States to modernize trade facilitation systems, harmonize standards, and promote digital solutions such as single-window platforms, electronic customs, and interoperable logistics platforms. These efforts will strengthen efficiency, transparency, and transnational coordination — aligning directly with the ACS's broader agenda on Transport and Connectivity (Outcome 4) to ensure that improved infrastructure is matched by seamless, integrated systems that allow goods, services, and people to move freely across borders.

82. By fostering dialogue among investment agencies, private-sector actors, and regional institutions, the ACS will help create a more attractive and stable environment for trade-related investment in logistics, digital infrastructure, and value-added production. In

partnership with development banks and financing platforms, the ACS will support Member States in mobilizing co-financing for priority projects, while enabling MSMEs and entrepreneurs to access markets more effectively. Through these actions, the ACS will bridge policy and investment gaps, linking trade facilitation with transport integration to drive competitiveness, diversification, and inclusive growth across the Greater Caribbean.

Intervention 2.3: Digital Integration and E-Commerce

83. Promote regional cooperation to expand digital integration and inclusive participation in the digital economy. Support policy alignment, innovation ecosystems, and capacity-building that empower small and medium enterprises to access and benefit from e-commerce opportunities.

84. The ACS will strengthen digital infrastructure, systems, and capacities to drive trade integration and economic competitiveness in the Greater Caribbean. Leveraging technology will enable Member States to participate more fully in regional and global markets while narrowing the digital divide that constrains productivity, innovation and economic diversification.

85. The ACS will catalyse the modernization of customs and border procedures, promote e-commerce ecosystems, and strengthen digital infrastructure and literacy to expand participation in the digital economy. Particular attention will be given to enhancing the capacity of MSMEs to trade and innovate digitally, while also empowering women and vulnerable communities to access new economic opportunities. Digital integration will reduce transaction costs, enhance transparency, and expand equitable market access across the region, driving innovation, entrepreneurship and inclusive participation in the digital economy.

86. Foster regional cooperation on data governance, digital platforms, and interoperable systems that enable real-time coordination and innovation as part of the Greater Caribbean's transition toward Industry 4.0. By connecting governments, private-sector actors, and knowledge institutions, the ACS will help build smarter, faster, and more resilient trade systems — ensuring that digital transformation becomes a pathway to competitiveness, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

Intervention 2.4: Competitiveness and Value Chain Integration

87. Facilitate the diversification and upgrading of intra-regional value chains through sustainable production, innovation partnerships, and investment

linkages. Encourage collaboration that reduces external dependency, enhances productivity, and embeds environmental and social sustainability within regional competitiveness strategies.

88. The ACS will work with Member States to promote the development of the creative economy, expand productive capabilities, and unlock the potential of MSMEs as engines of innovation and employment. Strengthening the Greater Caribbean’s position in regional and global markets requires building productive capacities that are competitive, complementary, and resilient. Enhancing trade competitiveness demands targeted support for high-value sectors, improved market access, and greater use of innovation and modern technologies that drive productivity, sustainability and inclusion.

89. By supporting intra-regional value-chain integration and diversification beyond traditional sectors, the ACS will help reduce dependency on external markets and strengthen the region’s resilience to global shocks. Through transnational cooperation, knowledge exchange, and private-sector engagement, the ACS will foster inclusive business development and technological innovation. These efforts will lay the foundation for a more diversified, opportunity-rich regional economy that competes effectively in global value chains while ensuring that growth remains sustainable, inclusive, and regionally balanced.

Outcome 3: Risk Reduction with a Climate Justice Approach

By 2035, the Greater Caribbean will strengthen equitable disaster risk reduction systems that enhance resilience and adaptive capacity, addressing the structural inequalities that heighten vulnerability. Rooted in participatory governance and guided by climate justice, these systems will ensure fair, inclusive, and sustainable community-centred responses to climate and disaster risks.

90. To advance Outcome 3, the ACS will promote integrated risk governance frameworks that elevate local knowledge and intercultural dialogue as foundational drivers of resilience. Through its convening role, the ACS will strengthen multisectoral collaboration — engaging government institutions, technical agencies, community-based organizations, research centres, academia, development partners, and the private sector — to catalyse investment in prevention, preparedness, and adaptation.

By empowering communities and amplifying diverse cultural voices, the ACS will help reframe disaster risk reduction as a shared regional commitment — anchored in equity, solidarity, and the principle that resilience begins with people.

This will be achieved through four main interventions as follows:

Intervention 3.1: Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR)

91. Foster inclusive, community-based disaster risk reduction by strengthening local capacity, promoting collaboration among institutions, and supporting locally led resilience initiatives that integrate traditional knowledge, gender equality, and social inclusion.

92. The ACS will promote a bottom-up participatory approach to disaster risk reduction that strengthens local capacities, fosters cooperation among community organizations, and ensures that resilience-building efforts are inclusive and equitable. By placing communities at the centre of planning, decision-making, and implementation, the ACS ensures that they are equipped to anticipate, respond to, and recover from crises.

93. Through training, knowledge-sharing, public education programmes, and support for locally led initiatives, the ACS will help Member States institutionalize community-based disaster risk management as a foundation of national and regional preparedness. In collaboration with civil society organizations with expertise in community engagement and risk awareness, this approach will translate local action into collective regional resilience — empowering people as active agents of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Intervention 3.2: Risk-Informed Decision-Making and Data-Driven Governance

94. Facilitate access to and use of high-quality risk data, geospatial information, and analytical tools to improve risk-informed governance and decision-making. Promote institutional partnerships that strengthen regional data sharing and early warning systems.

95. The ACS will strengthen the regional evidence base for risk governance by improving information systems, analytical capacity, and decision-support tools that enable timely, informed, and coordinated action. In a region where climate, environmental, and socio-economic hazards increasingly overlap, this effort will enhance the capacity to understand, anticipate, and manage risks — protecting lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure. In some Small Island Developing States, the economic impacts of major climate events have exceeded regional averages and, in certain cases, have reversed development gains through negative GDP growth, underscoring the need for risk-informed decision-making that fully accounts for differentiated vulnerabilities. A stronger evidence base is therefore

essential to building resilience and achieving sustainable development across the Greater Caribbean.

96. The ACS will work with Member States and regional partners to expand the use of open data platforms, geospatial analysis, and risk modelling. It will also promote early warning systems that are explicitly linked to operational evacuation and protection plans — recognizing that warnings must be accompanied by effective and inclusive mechanisms to mobilize people to safe locations. These efforts will close information gaps across countries and sectors, ensuring that risk knowledge is actionable, inclusive, and regionally consistent.

Intervention 3.3: Integrated Risk Governance and Policy Alignment

97. Promote policy coherence and multi-sector coordination to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation into national development and investment frameworks. Encourage dialogue and cooperation that align regional priorities with the Sendai Framework, the Paris Agreement, and the 2030 Agenda.

98. The ACS will strengthen disaster risk governance at the regional, national, and local levels to ensure coherent and coordinated approaches to risk prevention, preparedness, and response. The ACS will support Member States in aligning policies, institutions, and capacities with the principles of the Sendai Framework, promoting integrated systems that anticipate, manage, and reduce risks before they become disasters. Emphasis will be placed on participatory and climate-resilient governance models that link disaster risk reduction with sustainable development planning across the Greater Caribbean.

99. The ACS will deepen policy alignment by integrating emerging risk dynamics — including climate mobility, slow-onset events, and socio-environmental vulnerabilities — into national adaptation strategies and development planning. This approach will help Member States address evolving climate risks while maintaining coherence with regional and global policy frameworks.

100. The ACS will promote a whole-of-society approach, bringing together governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector. Through dialogue, knowledge exchange, and technical cooperation, the ACS will strengthen coordination among actors and advance inclusive governance models that reinforce resilience across the Greater Caribbean.

Intervention 3.4: Knowledge-Sharing and Advocacy for a Resilient Future

101. Catalyse regional advocacy and knowledge exchange to demonstrate the economic, social, and environmental value of investing in risk reduction with a climate justice approach. Support communication platforms and partnerships that amplify lessons learned and good practices across Member States.

102. The ACS will strengthen regional knowledge management, communication, and advocacy to build a culture of prevention and resilience across the Greater Caribbean. The ACS will coordinate evidence-based advocacy that demonstrates the social, economic, cultural, and environmental benefits of investing in disaster risk reduction with a climate justice approach. It will promote knowledge-sharing, training, and access to data and tools that enable equitable and inclusive resilience-building. Targeted support will be provided to Associate Members within the framework of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), fostering regional solidarity and coordinated, system-wide responses to risk and vulnerability. This includes the promotion of approaches that strengthen public-property insurance and risk-transfer mechanisms as part of comprehensive and sustainable resilience strategies across the region.

103. The ACS will foster inclusive, intercultural knowledge systems that honour the region's diverse cultures, languages, and traditions. Collaborating with governments, local authorities, technical agencies, civil society, Indigenous peoples and people of African descent, the ACS will promote the co-creation of knowledge products and the exchange of good practices and lessons learned — integrating scientific evidence with traditional wisdom to enhance preparedness, adaptation, and recovery.

104. Recognizing the power of cultural identity and collective awareness, the ACS will work with educators, media, and community networks to promote intercultural communication and people-centred story telling. By amplifying local voices, showcasing community leadership and highlighting culturally rooted solutions, the ACS will foster a shared sense of inclusion, solidarity and commitment — making intercultural communication a unifying force for participation in resilience building across the Greater Caribbean.

Outcome 4: Transport and Connectivity

By 2035, transport systems and connectivity in the Greater Caribbean will be modernized, integrated, efficient, and resilient — linking people, goods, and information through safe, sustainable, and digitally enabled networks.

105. To advance Outcome 4, the ACS will act as a catalyst for sustainable transport and connectivity across the Greater Caribbean — facilitating dialogue, aligning policies, and mobilizing partnerships to build a modern, integrated, and resilient mobility system. By strengthening coordination across air, maritime, and digital networks, the ACS will help reduce costs and expand access, positioning transport and connectivity as essential public goods that unite markets, enhance resilience, and deepen regional cohesion.

106. Through regional cooperation, coordinated policy reform, and investment in climate-resilient infrastructure, the ACS will ensure that connectivity becomes a lasting driver of wellbeing, inclusion, and sustainable development for all Caribbean peoples.

This will be achieved through four main interventions as follows:

Intervention 4.1: Modernization, Policy Alignment, and Digital Integration

107. Facilitate policy harmonization and digital transformation across all transport modes by promoting the adoption of international standards, shared data systems, and interoperable technologies. Encourage cooperation among governments, private actors, and regional institutions to improve connectivity, safety, and sustainability.

108. The ACS will foster regional cooperation to modernize transport systems across the Greater Caribbean, improving efficiency, safety, and resilience. Working with Member States, it will promote policy harmonization, digital transformation, and the adoption of international norms and standards that enhance interoperability across all modes of transport.

109. The ACS will facilitate alignment of regulatory frameworks with global benchmarks — such as those of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) — and promote secure, digital-by-default systems that simplify clearance and movement processes. Strengthening data governance and cybersecurity will be central to protecting critical infrastructure and ensuring the integrity of digital platforms that enable seamless mobility.

110. By promoting compatible rules, technologies, and information-sharing protocols, the ACS will foster greater accountability, interoperability, and operational cohesion — building the foundation for a unified and future-ready transport network across the

Greater Caribbean. Through this approach, the ACS will promote an integrated, safe, and cost-efficient regional transport ecosystem that reduces travel times and costs, improves reliability, and enhances transparency for users and operators.

Intervention 4.2: Connectivity Strategies and Network Expansion

111. Foster the design and implementation of coordinated air, maritime, and multimodal connectivity strategies that expand intra- and inter-regional routes. Support initiatives that enhance affordability, predictability, and performance while strengthening the region’s physical and digital linkages.

112. The ACS will work with Member States and regional partners to catalyse the design of coordinated air, maritime, and multimodal connectivity strategies that strengthen regional integration. These will include cooperative route planning, harmonized schedules on core corridors, and improved interfaces at ports and airports to ensure efficient transitions between modes of transport.

113. The ACS will also promote policies that lower operational barriers and expand service frequencies, while upholding international standards for safety, reliability, and quality. Given the Greater Caribbean’s geography —marked by island economies, dispersed markets, and uneven transport capacity — strengthening linkages is essential for trade, tourism, and social cohesion.

114. By promoting agreements that expand intra-regional and inter-regional routes and improve affordability and on-time performance, the ACS will help increase predictability for passengers, shippers, and MSMEs. These actions will strengthen market access, improve connectivity for remote and small economies, and ensure that the region’s transport systems remain flexible and adaptive to shifting patterns of demand, climate impacts, and emerging technologies. As digital connectivity is a critical foundation for regional mobility, logistics, and integration, the ACS will promote the creation of the digital infrastructure required to improve coordination, transparency, and efficiency across regional transport and communication systems.

Intervention 4.3: Digital Connectivity and Interoperable Backbone

115. Promote the deployment of open-access digital infrastructure to ensure reliable, affordable, and resilient connectivity. Facilitate partnerships and investment mechanisms that strengthen the region’s digital backbone and reduce connectivity gaps among Member States.

116. Working with Member States and partners, the ACS will promote the deployment of open-access digital infrastructure — supported by redundant submarine and terrestrial fibre corridors — to ensure reliable, affordable, and resilient connectivity. The ACS will recommend policy measures that lower deployment costs and promote fair competition, such as infrastructure sharing, spectrum harmonization, and pro-investment regulatory environments that stimulate innovation and inclusion.

117. By fostering interoperable data standards and digital public infrastructure, the ACS will help modernize transport systems and enable seamless information exchange across borders as well as through improved system interoperability, optimized logistics management, and the facilitation of real-time data exchange. The ACS will promote sustainable financing and catalyse strategic partnerships to expand high-quality digital connectivity — strengthening access to essential services, supporting businesses and communities, and ensuring that digital transformation becomes a driver of regional cohesion and inclusive development.

Intervention 4.4: Strategic Framework for Sustainable and Resilient Transport

118. The ACS will catalyse the development and implementation of a Regional Strategic Framework for Logistics and Mobility to drive investments, policies, and standards that guide coherent, sustainable, and integrated transport planning across the Greater Caribbean. It will foster policy dialogue and technical cooperation to align national mobility strategies with regional priorities — promoting interoperability, innovation, and equitable access to efficient and low-carbon transport services.

119. Working with Member States and partners, the ACS will facilitate the development of a Regional Strategic Framework for Logistics and Mobility to guide an integrated approach to transport planning and coordination across the Greater Caribbean. This framework will align with global norms and standards to reduce environmental and climate impacts, strengthen resilience and safety, and promote sustainable, low-carbon transport systems. It will serve as the roadmap for the development of a transport ecosystem that supports balanced territorial development, fosters social cohesion, and positions the Greater Caribbean as a leader in sustainable, inclusive, and climate-resilient connectivity.

120. The ACS will promote the integration and alignment of policies, processes, and data standards to enhance coordination and strengthen institutional and operational coherence across transport modes and borders. It will foster mechanisms that ensure equitable

access for residents, businesses, and MSMEs — particularly in island and coastal communities — so that connectivity becomes a driver of inclusion and opportunity. By advancing gender-responsive and socially inclusive mobility solutions, the ACS will help ensure that transport systems benefit all users equitably, while improving efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness throughout the region.

Outcome 5: Sustainable Tourism, Culture, and Heritage

By 2035, the Greater Caribbean will advance a sustainable and inclusive tourism system that empowers communities, safeguards natural and cultural heritage, and delivers equitable opportunities for inclusive development, creativity, and well-being across the region.

121. Tourism is an essential activity for the economies and cultures of the Greater Caribbean. To advance Outcome 5, the ACS will foster regional cooperation to embed sustainability into tourism policies, business models, and visitor behaviour. By promoting regenerative, community-based approaches and safeguarding cultural heritage, the ACS will help Member States develop competitive, equitable, and low-impact destinations aligned with global standards — positioning tourism as a lasting driver of resilience, creativity, and inclusive development across the Greater Caribbean.

122. As a regional catalyst, the ACS will amplify cooperation through high-level dialogue, technical coordination, policy alignment, and resource mobilization. By strengthening the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC), promoting good practices, and connecting governments, communities, and creative industries, the ACS will foster a tourism model that is regenerative, inclusive, and culturally grounded—ensuring shared wellbeing and resilience for future generations.

This will be achieved through four main interventions as follows:

Intervention 5.1: Regenerative Models and Ecosystem Protection

123. Foster the integration of regenerative and nature-positive practices into tourism strategies, promoting circular business models that revitalize communities and strengthen resilience. Support cooperation among tourism, environmental, and local actors to balance growth with ecosystem protection and climate responsibility.

124. The ACS will foster the integration of regenerative and nature-positive practices into tourism strategies to ensure that the vitality of the Greater Caribbean’s ecosystems continues to sustain livelihoods, biodiversity, and blue-carbon resources. As the region’s

natural assets face growing pressure from climate change, overexploitation, and pollution, this approach will promote circular business models that revitalize communities and strengthen resilience.

125. The ACS will promote blue-carbon initiatives, nature-based financing, and sustainable certification schemes to demonstrate how linking tourism with ecosystem protection yields economic benefits. The ACS will convene stakeholders, facilitate dialogue and promote knowledge exchange across governments, communities, and the private sector toward the realization of scalable, inclusive solutions. By aligning tourism more closely with the Paris Agreement, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the Sustainable Development Goals, the ACS will help to position the Greater Caribbean as a leading reference point for regenerative tourism.

Intervention 5.2: Safeguarding Cultural Heritage, Patrimony, and Identity

126. Promote the inclusion of heritage and patrimony within tourism and development policies to ensure authenticity, cultural integrity, and community ownership. Facilitate partnerships that preserve identity, celebrate diversity, and position the Greater Caribbean as a leading region for sustainable cultural tourism.

127. The ACS will promote the preservation and revitalization of the Greater Caribbean's cultural heritage and patrimony as living expressions of regional identity—interweaving Indigenous traditions, traditions of people of African descent, and diasporic traditions with historical sites, languages, and creative expressions. Recognizing these as sources of pride, belonging and opportunity, this effort will position culture as a vital asset for sustainable tourism, inclusive development, and social cohesion across the region.

128. The ACS will work with Member States to embed heritage and patrimony within tourism and development policies, ensuring authenticity, cultural integrity, and full community participation. This includes promoting investment frameworks that protect tangible and intangible heritage, supporting UNESCO-listed sites, and strengthening creative industries that connect culture to livelihoods.

129. Acting as a regional catalyst, the ACS will support resource mobilization, foster partnerships, promote inclusive governance for the preservation and promotion of culture. By amplifying community leadership, facilitating intercultural dialogue, and promoting regional cultural products and expressions, the ACS will help transform heritage into a

dynamic source of economic opportunity, identity, and inclusive development across the Greater Caribbean.

Intervention 5.3: Community Empowerment and Inclusive Value Chains

130. Promote policy and institutional frameworks that strengthen community participation, entrepreneurship, and equitable benefit-sharing across tourism value chains, ensuring that local actors become key partners in sustainable tourism development.

131. The ACS will support local innovation, skills training, and access to financing to expand opportunities for women, youth, Indigenous peoples, people of African descent, and other marginalized groups within the tourism economy. Through this approach, communities will move from being beneficiaries to co-creators of value, driving a more inclusive, resilient, and community-centred tourism model in the Greater Caribbean.

132. The ACS will promote policies and partnerships that strengthen community participation, foster entrepreneurship among MSMEs, and ensure equitable benefit-sharing across tourism value chains — expanding opportunities for women, youth, and other groups historically excluded from the formal tourism economy. In a region where creativity and innovation abound yet are constrained by informality, financing gaps, and weak coordination, this approach will help transform tourism into a more inclusive and sustainable driver of development in the Greater Caribbean.

133. Leveraging its convening power and technical cooperation, the ACS will foster innovation, sustainable financing, and people-centred approaches — ensuring that tourism becomes an enabler for reducing inequalities, strengthening resilience, and advancing shared wellbeing. Through strategic partnerships, training, and knowledge exchange, the ACS will link tourism with agriculture, creative industries, and MSME development to strengthen local ecosystems for inclusive growth. It will also promote mechanisms to support decent work, gender equality, and social protection, while encouraging the reinvestment of tourism revenues into education, health, and infrastructure.

Intervention 5.4: Standards, Technology, and Crisis Resilience

134. Strengthen and expand the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean as the regional platform for harmonized sustainability standards, certification systems, and responsible destination management. Develop regional norms and quality frameworks that promote sustainable, safe, and

inclusive tourism practices — ensuring accessibility, environmental responsibility, and competitiveness across destinations.

135. The ACS will promote the adoption of digital and green technologies to strengthen data systems, visitor management, and environmental monitoring, while supporting MSMEs and local operators in building innovation capacity. By integrating technology with sustainability standards and coordinated crisis response mechanisms, the ACS will enhance preparedness, transparency, and resilience — positioning the Greater Caribbean as a global reference for responsible and future-ready tourism.

136. In partnership with national and regional organizations, the ACS will encourage the integration of early-warning systems, digital platforms, and forecasting tools — building on initiatives such as the *CREWS Caribbean project* — to improve preparedness and crisis response. Combining sustainability standards with innovation and technology will facilitate access to information and tools that will enable destinations to make informed decisions about resource allocations, protect communities, and position the Greater Caribbean as a leader in responsible, resilient, and future-ready tourism.

5. CROSS CUTTING COMMITMENTS AND APPROACHES

137. The Strategic Plan is grounded in the ACS’s commitment to people-centred development and ecological integrity across the Greater Caribbean. It advances an inclusive and equitable model that places the well-being of its peoples and the sustainability of the planet at the forefront of regional cooperation. The ACS recognizes that equity, resilience, and sovereignty are inseparable from peaceful societies and the health of communities and ecosystems.

138. Accordingly, all strategic outcomes and interventions are guided by three interdependent, cross-cutting approaches which together ensure that the region’s development is sustainable, just, and people-centred. These approaches translate the ACS’s guiding principles into practice — ensuring that every outcome and intervention contributes to the region’s collective resilience and shared wellbeing.

5.1 People and Planet at the Centre of Sustainable Development

139. Centring people and planet is a strategic commitment for ensuring legitimacy, sustainability, and justice in regional cooperation. In the Greater Caribbean, human well-being and ecological integrity are deeply intertwined: communities depend on healthy ecosystems for food, water, livelihoods, and cultural identity, while environmental degradation exacerbates poverty, displacement, and inequality. Environmental challenges

are therefore not only ecological — they are also social and ethical — undermining human rights, dignity, autonomy, and survival.

140. At the same time, multiple and intersecting forms of inequality — rooted in gender, race, age, migration status, disability, geography, and socioeconomic conditions — constrain rights and deepen exclusion. To address these interrelated challenges, the ACS will catalyse intersectional, evidence-based approaches that promote equality and human rights, strengthen environmental stewardship, and foster collective resilience. By facilitating dialogue, advancing climate justice, strengthening multi-sector coordination, and cultivating rights-based partnerships, the ACS will promote inclusive policy frameworks and elevate community-led initiatives.

141. Within this people-centred and rights-based approach, the ACS also recognises the internationally acknowledged Right to Development, which underscores that all peoples must be able to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from inclusive and sustainable development. Integrating this principle — together with the recognition of environmental rights as essential to human well-being — reinforces the commitment to advancing well-being and equality across the Greater Caribbean.

Community Leadership

142. Communities are the foundation of the Greater Caribbean’s resilience and creativity. Recognizing and supporting cultural agents — including artists, educators, knowledge keepers, elders, and community leaders — is essential to sustaining social cohesion and inclusive development. Through this lens, the ACS will promote community-driven solutions, foster participatory governance, and catalyse investment in cultural and educational infrastructure, ensuring that local voices are meaningfully integrated into policy design and implementation.

Climate Justice

143. Climate justice is a strategic imperative for the Greater Caribbean. The region’s high vulnerability to climate change poses urgent risks to lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure. In alignment with regional and global climate justice commitments, the ACS will work to empower communities and ensure that climate responses are fair, effective, and locally led. Climate justice is inseparable from the ACS’s commitment to people and planet, affirming that environmental action must be equitable, rights-based, and rooted in community resilience.

5.2 Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Young People

Gender Equality

144. Gender equality is a central pillar of sustainable development. While women contribute across all sectors of Greater Caribbean life, structural inequalities limit their full participation in economic recovery, sustainable development, and climate response. Women remain overrepresented in informal work, underrepresented in leadership, and more exposed to poverty, displacement, and violence during times of crisis. Addressing these disparities is not only a matter of equality and justice — it is a precondition for sustainable development.

145. Anchored in the Regional Gender Agenda, the Montevideo Consensus, and CEDAW, the ACS is committed to advancing gender-responsive, intersectional, and inclusive policies that empower women as leaders, innovators, and equal agents of change. A Substantive Equality Analysis was developed to inform the ACS Strategic Plan to 2035, identifying challenges and opportunities to promote inclusive development through the empowerment of women across the five strategic priorities:

- a) ***Preservation and conservation of the Caribbean Sea:*** Women play crucial yet undervalued roles in coastal livelihoods and environmental stewardship. Effective marine governance must incorporate their knowledge, experiences, and leadership.
- b) ***Trade and external economic relations:*** Economic participation remains unequal, with women overrepresented in the informal sector and underrepresented in leadership and high-growth sectors. Gender-inclusive trade policies and entrepreneurial support systems can unlock significant economic potential.
- c) ***Risk Reduction with a Climate Justice Approach:*** Climate change disproportionately affects women and girls due to pre-existing inequalities in access to land, resources, decision-making, and adaptive capacity. Women also face heightened risks in disasters, including loss of livelihoods, increased care burdens, and exposure to violence. Gender-responsive climate policies and risk reduction frameworks are essential to strengthening household and community resilience.
- d) ***Transport & connectivity:*** Gender disparities in mobility, digital access, and technological literacy limit women's full participation. Promoting gender-equitable infrastructure and digital inclusion is central to building a more connected and inclusive Caribbean.

e) ***Sustainable tourism, culture and heritage:*** Women are key custodians of cultural heritage and form a substantial part of the tourism workforce. However, they are also vulnerable to low-wage jobs and gender-based violence, including trafficking. A gender-sensitive tourism strategy must both protect and empower women as vital actors in this sector.

146. Gender equality is central to the ACS's commitment to people and planet. Building on the comprehensive equality analysis and recommended points of entry, the ACS will integrate gender-responsive programs and actions across all outcomes and interventions.

Empowerment of Young People

147. With nearly 160 million adolescents and youth across Latin America and the Caribbean, the empowerment of young people is both a demographic imperative and a strategic opportunity. Their participation in decision-making processes is not only a fundamental right, but also a catalyst for innovation, resilience, and inclusive development. The ACS recognizes that youth engagement must be embedded across all strategic priorities—ensuring that young people are not peripheral beneficiaries but key actors in shaping the future of the Greater Caribbean.

148. Empowering youth is essential to transforming entrenched gender dynamics and driving lasting social change. Adolescents and young adults bring fresh perspectives, digital fluency, and community-rooted leadership that challenge exclusion and violence and contribute to preventing violence, strengthening social cohesion, and enhancing the impact of public policies in the areas of security and sustainability. The ACS will support youth-led initiatives, intergenerational dialogue, and inclusive policy spaces that elevate young people's voices — especially those from marginalized communities, border regions, and climate-vulnerable areas.

149. As a cross-cutting approach, youth empowerment will be operationalized through institutional partnerships, capacity-building programs, and regional knowledge exchanges. The ACS will work with member states to mainstream youth leadership within governance structures, support the participation of adolescents and youth in cultural and educational diplomacy, and ensure that young people are meaningfully engaged in monitoring and evaluating regional progress.

150. By harnessing the energy, creativity, and transformative potential of youth — and connecting them across linguistic, cultural, and geographic boundaries — the ACS affirms its commitment to a future that is not only more equitable and secure, but also more visionary, innovative, and intergenerationally inclusive.

5.3 Peace, Stability, and Security in the Greater Caribbean

151. Aware that peace is a supreme good and a legitimate aspiration of all peoples and that its preservation is an essential element of the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean; reaffirming that integration strengthens the vision of a just international order grounded in law and in a culture of peace that excludes the use of force and all illegitimate means of defence, including weapons of mass destruction and, in particular, nuclear weapons; recognizing that peace constitutes the foundation upon which sustainable development rests, by enabling societies to live in conditions of well-being with security and dignity.

152. In this context, peace in the Greater Caribbean represents a collective aspiration founded on principles widely shared across the region, including the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and the promotion of relations based on cooperation, solidarity, and mutual understanding. This shared aspiration conceives peace as a public good and an enabling condition for sustainable development, human well-being, and the consolidation of just, peaceful, and inclusive societies in the region. The ACS reaffirms that the interpretation and implementation of this Strategic Plan shall be carried out without prejudice to the sovereignty of States, including their territorial integrity, and to their legal positions in accordance with international law and in observance of their respective domestic legal frameworks.

153. The ACS recognizes that advancing toward the full realization of this shared aspiration requires a sustained and shared commitment by all Member States. The consolidation of peace in the Greater Caribbean should be understood as a progressive and long-term process, based on the continuous application of the Association's foundational principles — consultation, cooperation, and concerted action — as a guiding framework for the prevention of and response to the diverse forms of violence, insecurity, and instability affecting the region. In this context, the Association reaffirms its commitment to work, facilitate, and articulate efforts among its entire membership to translate this shared aspiration into concrete progress toward more peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies.

6. ACCELERATORS

154. Accelerators are multipliers that enhance the effectiveness of all Outcomes. They operate across every strategic priority — strengthening partnerships, financing, communications, and data systems — to transform vision into measurable action.

Together, they ensure that the ACS's initiatives are coherent, well-resourced, and capable of generating lasting regional impact.

155. To realize the ambition of the ACS Strategic Plan to 2035, four Accelerators — Strategic Partnerships, Innovative Financing, Advocacy and Communications, and Data and Knowledge — will drive progress across all five strategic priorities. Acting as cross-cutting catalysts, they reinforce evidence-based decision-making, expand strategic alliances, diversify financial resources, and amplify the region's collective voice for sustainable development.

6.1 Strategic Partnerships

Building alliances that expand capacity, align agendas, and drive collective implementation.

156. Strategic partnerships will enhance the ACS's ability to co-design and co-deliver transformative initiatives by leveraging the comparative strengths of diverse actors. The ACS will foster strategic alliances that amplify collective impact and reduce duplication. Through regional platforms for policy alignment, technical coordination, and joint programming, the ACS will translate collective Greater Caribbean interests into actionable proposals. A key priority will be the advancement of South–South and triangular cooperation, enabling Member States to exchange knowledge, scale successful initiatives, and jointly mobilize resources.

157. Strategic partnerships will enhance the ACS's ability to co-design and co-deliver transformative initiatives by leveraging the comparative strengths of diverse actors. All partnerships will be guided by the principle of regional ownership, ensuring that Member States retain full leadership, autonomy, and decision-making authority over development priorities and programmes, even as they engage external partners for technical, financial, or institutional support.

158. The ACS will foster strategic alliances that amplify collective impact and reduce duplication of efforts. Through regional platforms for policy alignment, technical coordination, and joint programming, the ACS will translate collective Greater Caribbean interests into actionable proposals. A key priority will be the advancement of South–South and triangular cooperation, enabling Member States to exchange knowledge, scale successful initiatives, and jointly mobilize resources.

159. ACS will leverage its convening power through high-level dialogues, conferences, and multi-stakeholder platforms to mobilize partnerships, align regional priorities, and translate strategic objectives into coordinated action.

160. The ACS will deepen collaboration with key regional organizations such as CARICOM, SICA, SELA, and CELAC, recognizing these partnerships as strategic accelerators that enhance the effectiveness of all Strategic Outcomes and interventions. The ACS will also engage technical and financial partners including the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), CAF- Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, UN ECLAC, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Central American Tourism Integration Secretariat (SITCA by its Spanish acronym), and the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO). Partnerships with universities, research networks, and private-sector actors will foster innovation, expand access to expertise, and promote public–private–community collaboration.

6.2 Innovative Financing

Unlocking innovative, inclusive, and sustainable financing to deliver regional priorities.

161. Innovative financing is essential for the ACS to implement its Strategic Plan and deliver tangible benefits to its Member States and Associate Members. In line with the principles and key actions of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (Sevilla Commitment), the ACS will facilitate access to blended and innovative financing — including debt-for-climate and debt-for-nature swaps, resilience bonds, sustainability-linked loans, and concessional finance — to advance climate adaptation, infrastructure modernization, and inclusive trade, while strengthening domestic ownership and long-term fiscal sustainability.

162. Consistent with this framework, the ACS will strengthen institutional capacity and investment governance to enhance readiness and unlock resources for the five Strategic Priorities defined in this Plan. By convening multi-stakeholder financing platforms and partnering with regional development banks, global climate-finance facilities, and other public and private financing actors, the ACS will position itself as a trusted regional convener — mobilizing strategic investments, understood as country- and region-led investments aligned with national and regional priorities, and designed to crowd in additional public and private finance through blended finance, risk-sharing instruments, catalytic capital, and other innovative mechanisms.

6.3 Advocacy and Communication

Shaping global narratives and driving regional solidarity through strategic messaging.

163. Advocacy and communication are strategic drivers of regional transformation. By promoting coherent messaging and shared narratives and actions around common priorities, the ACS will build trust, strengthen accountability, and mobilize collective action around shared priorities. Through a modern, data-informed communication ecosystem that integrates traditional, digital, and social media, the ACS will engage diverse audiences — governments, institutions, private sector, academia, and the public — to foster greater understanding, visibility, and collaboration on regional priorities.

164. A coherent and proactive communication strategy will position the ACS as a trusted convener and authoritative voice in regional and global fora. This approach moves beyond reactive messaging toward strategic narrative shaping — linking ACS priorities to global frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other multilateral commitments. By elevating the Greater Caribbean perspective on global challenges, the ACS will contribute to shaping policies and partnerships that reflect the realities and aspirations of its Member States.

165. Through coordinated messaging, evidence-based storytelling, and high-visibility campaigns, the ACS will amplify local voices and ensure that grassroots experiences, innovations, and cultural expressions are visible, valued, and integrated into regional policy narratives. This will foster a more inclusive and participatory regional discourse — one that strengthens legitimacy, deepens solidarity, and informs more responsive governance.

166. By cultivating a coherent, principles-based regional voice, the ACS will strengthen its influence in multilateral negotiations, attract strategic partnerships, and reinforce its role as a unifying force for the Greater Caribbean.

6.4 Data and Knowledge

Harnessing regional data and knowledge to drive coordinated, evidence-based action across the Greater Caribbean.

167. In an increasingly complex and interconnected region, the ability to generate, share, and apply timely, disaggregated, and actionable information has become a cornerstone of effective cooperation. Strengthening regional data ecosystems is therefore a strategic

imperative. Reliable and interoperable data enable Member States to measure progress, align policies, and translate commitments into tangible results. Advancing open-data standards, digital infrastructure protection, and inclusive access to knowledge is essential to strengthen environmental stewardship, risk-informed decision-making, and the continuity of trade, transport, and communications.

168. The ACS will act as a regional catalyst and knowledge integrator — convening stakeholders, fostering partnerships, and brokering exchanges that convert fragmented information into collective intelligence. By enhancing data governance and leveraging regional expertise, the ACS will support Member States in transforming evidence into coordinated, cross-sectoral action. Through this role, the Association will strengthen the foundations for evidence-based policy, innovation, and resilience across all five Strategic Impact Results — ensuring that knowledge becomes a shared asset for sustainable and inclusive development.

169. Looking ahead, the ACS will also invest in building a culture of learning, foresight, and digital innovation that enhances regional capacities to anticipate risks and opportunities. By embedding monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) frameworks into program design, and promoting collaborative research and digital literacy initiatives, the ACS will contribute to advancing initiatives that bridge data gaps, democratize access to information, and drive a more connected, knowledge-based Greater Caribbean. This future-oriented approach will ensure that the region not only reacts to change but actively shapes it through collective intelligence and shared vision.

7. ENABLERS

170. The ACS is committed to becoming more strategic, agile, and accountable, ensuring that the Secretariat is fit for purpose to deliver on the ambition of the Strategic Plan to 2035. This shift responds directly to Member States' call for renewal and modernization and is anchored in four Enablers — *Human Capacity, Systems and Processes, Technology, and Resource Mobilization*. Together, these Enablers form a resilient organizational foundation that enhances operational efficiency, strengthens delivery systems, and ensures that the ACS can translate strategic priorities into measurable results across the Greater Caribbean.

171. The Enablers also give practical expression to the guidance of Member States articulated through recent Ministerial Declarations — including the calls for renewal, modernization, and a fit-for-purpose ACS. They embody the organization's collective commitment to institutional strengthening, improved governance, and results-driven performance in service of the region's development priorities.

7.1 Human Capacity

Cultivating a skilled, motivated, and values-driven workforce to drive results.

172. The ACS's ability to deliver results depends fundamentally on its human capacity. To meet evolving demands, the Association will take a strategic approach to workforce development, ensuring that its internal structure, roles, and capacities are fully aligned with the Strategic Plan. The ACS will prioritize targeted recruitment, professional growth, and inclusive organizational practices. This will require strengthening institutional design, modernizing operational processes, and fostering a high-performing, principles-based workforce capable of responding effectively to the region's priorities.

173. A resilient institutional culture will be built on mutual respect, gender equality, and a results-driven orientation, paired with a culture of care that supports staff well-being and psychological safety. The ACS will embed leadership development, mentorship, and continuous learning across all levels, fostering adaptability, innovation, and cross-functional collaboration in pursuit of regional priorities.

174. Workforce and structural alignment with strategic priorities will be continuously assessed to ensure the ACS has the right skills, scale, and structure to fulfil its mandate. This includes strengthening human resource systems to support performance management, succession planning, and career development. By investing in its human capacity and institutional architecture, the ACS will build the institutional agility and collective capacity needed to navigate complexity, deliver results, and sustain impact across the Greater Caribbean.

7.2 Systems and Processes

Streamlining planning and decision-making to strengthen clarity, accountability, and timely delivery.

175. Realigning systems and internal processes is central to strengthening governance, simplifying workflows, facilitating agile decision-making, and integrating adaptive planning and risk management into institutional practice. The ACS will streamline internal processes for timely and informed decision-making — strengthening operational efficiency and enhancing team cohesion. The ACS will also institutionalize results-based management systems that align planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring across all strategic priorities.

176. Strengthening and consolidating ACS systems and processes enhances institutional oversight and supports a proactive approach to risk. A risk management framework will be characterized by clear accountability pathways, timely data flows, and adaptive protocols that anticipate and mitigate institutional, financial, and reputational risks.

177. To support this shift, the ACS will standardize workflows and develop cross-functional coordination mechanisms that reduce duplication and support timely, dynamic decision-making across teams and functions. Learning-oriented monitoring and evaluation systems will support quality assurance and replication of successful practices, enabling the ACS to shift from reactive operations to proactive strategy. These systems will also foster institutional memory, support scenario planning, and ensure that strategic adjustments are grounded in evidence and aligned with long-term goals.

7.3 Technology

Leveraging digital and knowledge systems to enhance coordination, performance, and innovation.

178. Digital transformation is a foundational condition for a modern and efficient ACS, tightly linked to strengthening institutional systems and processes. The Association will pursue a digital-first approach, modernizing core management systems across human resources, finance, and project workflows. This will unify fragmented functions into interoperable platforms that improve decision-making, safeguard institutional memory, and enhance data access and security.

179. To support this transformation, the ACS will invest in scalable, secure, and user-centred technologies that enable timely data flows, integrated performance tracking, and cross-functional collaboration. These systems will reduce administrative burden, support results-based management, and ensure that strategic and operational decisions are grounded in reliable evidence.

180. Digital platforms will also play a critical role in strengthening regional coordination. The ACS will prioritize tools that facilitate the sharing of best practices, innovations, and lessons learned among Member States and Associate Members — positioning the Secretariat as a regional knowledge hub. These platforms will support multilingual access, inclusive participation, and dynamic knowledge exchange, reinforcing the ACS's convening role and amplifying the impact of regional initiatives.

181. As digital systems become embedded across institutional functions, the ACS will adopt governance protocols that ensure data integrity, cybersecurity, and ethical use of

technology. This will enable the Association to manage risk, adapt to emerging challenges, and build a resilient digital infrastructure that supports long-term strategic goals.

7.4 Resource Mobilization and Financial Sustainability

Aligning and expanding resources to strengthen delivery capacity and sustainable financing.

182. The ACS's ability to implement its Strategic Plan depends on a predictable and resilient funding base that supports both the Secretariat's core functions and the delivery of the Plan's five Strategic Priorities. While Member State and Associate Member contributions remain essential, the ambition of a revitalized ACS requires a diversified and innovative approach to resource mobilization. Sustained investment is critical to advancing the enabling conditions — Human Capacity, Systems and Processes, and Technology — as well as the cross-cutting commitments that define the Association's strategic vision. These are not standalone aspirations, but interdependent commitments that require budgetary alignment with institutional needs.

183. The ACS will actively mobilise financial resources to support multi-country and multi-sectoral initiatives that generate collective benefits across the Greater Caribbean. These initiatives will be designed to address the interconnected challenges of sustainability, resilience, and inclusion — ensuring that investments support integrated action and shared prosperity. By promoting joint programming, innovative partnership models, and blended financing options, the ACS will translate regional cooperation into measurable outcomes for all Member States and Associate Members.

184. Diversified and innovative resource mobilization refers to a broader mix of partnerships, financing modalities, and engagement mechanisms that complement the traditional contributions of Member States and Associate Members. These mechanisms will help expand the design, financing, and implementation of regional and multi-country initiatives across the Greater Caribbean. As the funding landscape evolves, the ACS will adapt by strengthening existing partnerships, expanding strategic networks, and diversifying instruments.

185. To strengthen financial sustainability and budgetary coherence, the ACS will progressively introduce cost-recovery measures into its resource-mobilisation strategy. Budget lines for Secretariat coordination and delivery functions will be systematically integrated into project proposals and partnership agreements in which the ACS facilitates access to financing or supports implementation. By linking Secretariat functions to regional initiatives, the ACS reaffirms its central coordinating role and ensures it is

sustainably resourced. Innovative approaches to in-kind contributions — such as internships, volunteers, and secondments — will further expand technical capabilities and reinforce strategic partnerships.

186. Investment in the Secretariat’s internal capacity is essential for implementing the Plan’s Accelerators — particularly Strategic Partnerships and Innovative Financing — and will generate a multiplier effect on regional impact. By strengthening its ability to convene partners, structure cooperation frameworks, and coordinate implementation, the ACS will unlock greater technical and financial resources for action across the region — transforming institutional strengthening into tangible outcomes that advance the Plan’s Strategic Priorities at regional and national levels.

8. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 Implementation Plans

187. The launch of the ACS’s first comprehensive Strategic Plan underscores the importance of translating collective ambition into focused delivery and measurable results. The ACS Strategic Plan to 2035 will be operationalized through two successive five-year Implementation Plans, each linking the outcomes and interventions with concrete outputs, activities and performance targets. These plans will be underpinned by a Results and Resources Framework that defines performance indicators, financial allocations, institutional responsibilities, and timelines for delivery. The phased approach enables adaptive management, mid-term review, and strategic recalibration in response to emerging challenges, shifting priorities, and lessons learned.

188. Each Implementation Plan will serve as a dynamic instrument for translating strategic intent into measurable action. It will guide programmatic execution across thematic areas, ensure alignment with Member States’ priorities, and embed the cross-cutting approaches into all interventions. The ACS Secretariat will play a central role in coordinating implementation, promoting action, mobilizing resources, and facilitating multi-sector collaboration across Member States, technical agencies, regional development partners, the private sector, communities, and academia — driving collective impact and regional coherence.

8.2 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

189. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) will be embedded throughout the implementation cycle to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. A MEL framework will be established for each five-year phase, incorporating

baseline data, performance targets, and disaggregated indicators. Special attention will be given to participatory monitoring approaches that uphold the principles of inclusion, rights, and resilience.

190. Following the approval of the Strategic Plan to 2035, the ACS will develop a practical Results and Resources Framework (RRF) and a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) approach to accompany implementation. This framework will emphasize learning, accountability, and adaptive management — focusing on tracking progress, documenting lessons, and strengthening institutional capacities. Through periodic reviews and reflection, the ACS will ensure that implementation remains evidence-informed, efficient, and responsive to Member States’ evolving priorities.

191. The ACS will catalyse partnerships for formative research and evaluation to inform evidence-based programming and strengthen adaptive learning. These initiatives will generate insights that feed into regional knowledge platforms, support peer exchange, and inform the refinement of policies, programs, and partnerships.

192. Together, the Implementation Plans and MEL framework will ensure that the Strategic Plan to 2035 remains a living document — responsive to context, grounded in evidence, and capable of driving transformational change across the Greater Caribbean.

8.3 Modes of Engagement

193. The Strategic Plan to 2035 will be implemented through a collaborative model grounded in consultation, cooperation, and concerted action. The implementation arrangements of the ACS are designed to foster regional cooperation, inclusive dialogue, technical coordination, and policy alignment across the Greater Caribbean.

194. **Consultation:** The ACS will facilitate structured and inclusive dialogue among Member States to align priorities, share expertise, and develop a unified regional agenda through political, institutional, and social articulation.

195. **Cooperation:** The ACS will promote collaborative exchanges of knowledge, technology, resources, and best practices across Member States, including South-South, North-South, and Triangular Cooperation with Observer countries and strategic partners.

196. **Concerted Action:** The ACS will implement coordinated initiatives, joint programs, and transformative regional projects, translating shared intent into practical outcomes through collective political will and technical coordination.

8.4 Strategic Approach to Institutional Renewal

197. The ACS Secretariat, headquartered in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, serves as the central coordinating body of the Association. It plays a vital role in translating political mandates into concrete actions by facilitating cooperation, mobilizing resources, and supporting the implementation and monitoring of regional initiatives. The Secretariat also fosters inter-agency coordination, evidence-based planning, and inclusive approaches consistent with the principles and priorities defined by the Member States.

198. Sound governance remains central to the ACS's ability to deliver on its founding mandate of consultation, cooperation, and concerted action. As the Organization enters a new decade, Member States have reaffirmed the importance of strengthening its governance culture that promotes transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, and efficiency — strengthening the Secretariat's capacity to act with coherence and follow-through.

199. The Strategic Plan to 2035 therefore encourages a measured and Member State-driven process of institutional strengthening — aimed at optimizing and better coordinating existing structures and processes, rather than creating new ones. This approach will enhance clarity of roles, improve alignment between political decisions and operational delivery, and support more agile and responsive action. Institutional renewal will remain a gradual and participatory process, guided by the collective will of Member States and firmly anchored in the ACS's founding principles and legal framework.

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