

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT OF THE 27TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE ACS MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

**25th INTERSESSIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 28TH ORDINARY
MEETING OF THE ACS MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

ACS Secretariat, Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

(Virtual Meeting)

18th January, 2023

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

27TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE ACS MINISTERIAL COUNCIL (Virtual Meeting)

Mexico, 29th April, 2022

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

<<NICARAGUA>>

OPENING CEREMONY

The 27th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States was held virtually in Mexico City, Mexico on April 29th, 2022 and was presided over by **Mr. Maximiliano Reyes Zuniga, Under Secretary for Latin America and the Caribbean** of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, in his capacity as Chair of the Ministerial Council. **H.E. David Comissiong**, Ambassador of Barbados to CARICOM and **H.E. Aquilino Villamonte**, Ambassador of the Diplomatic and Consular Career of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama represented in their capacity as Vice-Chairs, while **H.E. Michael René Campbell Hooker**, Minister-Advisor to the President of the Republic for International and Greater Caribbean Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Nicaragua represented as Rapporteur. The ACS delegation was led by Secretary General, **H.E. Rodolfo Sabonge**. Additionally, the special presence of **H.E. Mario Adolfo Búcaro Flores, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala**, in his capacity as incoming Chair of the Council of Ministers of the ACS.

Representatives of (22) Member States; (4) Associate Member State; (7) Observer Countries; (1) Founding Observer; (1) Observer Organisation and (1) Specially Invited Organisation attended the meeting. The full list of the meeting's participants is attached at **Annex 001** of this report.

• **Opening Remarks by the Chair of the Ministerial Council**

The Chairman of the Ministerial Council inaugurated the 27th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States and extended greetings to the Secretary General and the participants. He cordially welcomed the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, H.E. Mario Adolfo Búcaro Flores. He signalled Mexico's honour to have served as Chair to the Ministerial Council for the period 2021-2022 and acknowledged with appreciation the team at the Secretariat with which Mexico had worked closely. He noted that today's meeting culminated a year of intense activities by Mexico on the path to regional cooperation and the

development of programmes to the benefit of the countries of the Greater Caribbean. He further remarked that the difficulties faced as countries embarked upon recovery from the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic could not be overlooked, particularly as governments and the ACS alike were forced to redefine and redesign their priorities and objectives to adapt to the current context. He noted that after a year executing regional activities Mexico would pass on its role of Chair to its successor, Guatemala. He mentioned that Mexico had been involved in topics such as disaster preparedness and the use of sargassum seaweed and have sought to facilitate access to programmes surrounding these issues for other ACS countries.

The Chair then informed that this 27th Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council would adopt the reports of the Chairmen of the ACS Special Committees, as well as the Draft Budget for the 2022-2023 biennium, and would also consider the Action Plan for 2022-2028, in addition to electing the new Executive Boards of the Special Committees. Lastly, the meeting would witness the official transfer of Chairmanship from Mexico to Guatemala. In closing, the Chair expressed his hope for fruitful deliberations, and that the new chapter being embarked upon will consolidate the achievements of Secretary General Sabonge and his team, whom the ACS Members hold in high esteem.

The Chair's opening remarks are at **Annex 002** to this Report.

Opening Remarks by the Secretary General

ACS Secretary General, Rodolfo Sabonge presented opening remarks acknowledging all represented heads of delegations. He relayed that the uncertainty of the times demanded that the ACS adapt to new paradigms. He noted that the region had faced a lack of access to vaccines and the growing economic and social impact of the pandemic and that these vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by the impact of climate change and the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. He explained that the new paradigms forced the ACS to redefine priorities and address them as a matter of urgency. Using the pandemic and war to illustrate regional and global interconnectedness, the ACS Secretary General stressed on the urgency to act, to focus on improving governance, to align scarce resources to achieve results and to identify solutions given the uncertainty that exists.

However, he stated that despite the international economic situation, cooperation funds were available and there exists an appetite for new and innovative projects in several topics that include the focal axes of the ACS. He related that the plans of the ACS were based on international cooperation and that its priorities must focus on improving governance, including human resources. He expressed his belief that the ACS pension fund which was originally created to be a retirement fund for staff should function as a pension fund as initially intended. He opined that an important step towards better governance was the completion of the first two phases of the

management audit carried out by one of the best audit firms in Trinidad and Tobago. He related that the progress made in the audit had led to the Committee on Budget and Administration recommending the creation of a working group to review the results of the audit and to present recommendations to the Ministerial Council. He looked forward to the completion of the third phase of the audit which, it is anticipated, will cover other areas and improve the governance of the ACS.

The ACS Secretary General lamented that the Association was accumulating financial deficit due to the non-payment of contributions. He explained that the ACS was able to cut costs during the pandemic by holding more virtual meetings as opposed to travelling, but he made it clear that the ACS would not be able to return to functioning as it had pre-pandemic. He regretted that some positions remain vacant as the ACS contrives to pay the current payroll.

Despite all these vicissitudes, he expressed his satisfaction with the proposed Plan of Action 2022 -2028 and the level of commitment, dedication and passion observed in the membership. He referred to the Plan of Action 2022-2028 as a flagship enterprise which not only reflects the collective awareness of the increasingly challenging realities facing the greater Caribbean Region, but also the action that must be taken to build a more resilient Association in the face of geopolitical developments.

He explained that, according to ACS regulations, the Ministerial Council has the authority to approve the Plan of Action, but ultimately, the Heads of State and Government would be responsible for later endorsing the first strategic plan of the ACS at the IX Summit, together with a Declaration. He recognized the support of the Government of Mexico and its entire work team during the past eleven months, and also recognized the contributions of the Korean Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the Government of Turkey, and the other governments that have contributed lecturers and courses to all the countries of the region.

The Secretary General gave an overview of the proceedings and expected outcomes of the Ministerial.

He posited in this regard that, in matters of international cooperation, the ACS must adapt to donors' requirements. He underscored that, in order to be successful in attracting cooperation, the ACS must first gather intelligence, recognise opportunities and design strategies to take opportune advantage of potential cooperation opportunities. , In closing, the Secretary General reiterated his willingness to work hand in hand with the entire membership to ensure the growth and the development of the Greater Caribbean Region.

The Secretary General's opening remarks are at **Annex 003** to this Report.

At the invitation of the outgoing Chair of the Ministerial Council, the **Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala** gave a brief message, in which he posited that the

meeting was an opportunity to not only talk about climate change but also climate action, the blue agenda and the green agenda. He opined that Members must work together to have all of the necessary inputs to achieve the vision of the ACS Secretary General. He affirmed his commitment to strategically working with the Membership.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS

The Chair submitted the agenda for consideration and comments. Having received no objections, the agenda was subsequently approved.

With no objections, the Agenda and procedural matters were approved and the official photograph of the meeting was taken.

II. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

The Council approved the report of the Chairman of the Ministerial Council.

With no objections, and taking into consideration the recommendations and decisions of the Preparatory Meeting, the Ministerial Council approved the Report of the Chairman of The Ministerial Council.

The Report of the Chairman of the Ministerial Council is at **Annex.004** to this report.

III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ACS

The Secretary General presented a summary of his report, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting important achievements and meetings under the Chairmanship of Mexico and key strategic bilateral consultations undertaken with the objectives of improving flexibility of the ACS to receive contributions; consolidating partnerships and securing innovative financing for recovery, sustainable development and the implementation of the ACS Action Plan.

The Secretary General highlighted the key results of the 26th Ordinary meeting of the Ministerial Council, highlighting the handover of the ACS Chairmanship to Mexico for 2021-2022; the ACS 9th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government and the Secretariat's discussion paper 'Strategic Direction towards the ACS Plan of Action 2022-2024.' He also highlighted meetings which took place under the chairmanship of Mexico and listed the follow up decisions made in the 26th Ordinary meeting of the Ministerial Council. Moreover, the ACS Secretary General informed the meeting participants of some bilateral consultations and the key deliverables from these consultations. He also made mention of the different Directorates of the ACS and

related that their activities and achievements were further elaborated in the full report of the Secretary General.

The Secretary General's Report is at **Annex.005** to this report.

The power point presentation of the Secretary General is at **Annex 006**.

The representative of Dominican Republic opined that despite the COVID-19 pandemic the level of work produced had not been affected. He related that no one had been prepared to face the effects of the pandemic. He congratulated Mexico for its work as Chair and also congratulated the ACS Secretary General for recommending wise actions. He further offered support to the incoming chair, Guatemala. He affirmed that the ACS must be defended as it works for the benefit of the Greater Caribbean region.

The representative of Honduras expressed his gratitude for the organisation and hosting of the meeting. He extended warm greetings to all of the participants and conveyed his commitment to supporting the mandate of the Committee 2021-2022. He opined that the regional agenda must be examined despite the setbacks of COVID-19. The representative also mentioned that Honduras would apply to be part of the Executive Boards of the ACS Special Committees.

The representative of Costa Rica thanked Mexico for its chairmanship and wished Guatemala success in its new capacity. She also expressed gratitude for the meeting as it convened several high level representatives such as Foreign ministers. In her capacity as Chair of the Special Committee on Cooperation and Resource Mobilisation, she also expressed gratitude for the support of Suriname and Jamaica. She related that best practices of the ACS countries must be examined. She called for collaboration under the guidance of the ACS Secretary General. She affirmed that Costa Rica will work with Associates at the bilateral and multilateral levels to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. She proposed examining coastal areas, good governance, the process of decision making without excluding any persons, gaps, poverty, the labour market, migration, rights of people, short and long term transparent policies which can combat the threats of climate change and environmental and socio-economic changes as well as air and maritime connectivity and ways in which the ACS can be strengthened.

The representative of Jamaica expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to examine the work of the ACS. He extended commendations to Mexico for their chairmanship. He opined that the meetings of the ACS have increased the visibility of the Association. He hoped that even with a shift in leadership that the ACS will continue on the trajectory of cooperation, consultation and concerted action. He expressed anticipation to work with Guatemala to advance priority areas which have been agreed upon.

The representative of Panama expressed his gratitude for the meeting and for the leadership of Mexico. He also thanked all of the Executive Boards of the different Special Committees who created a space to respond to the pandemic. He further

thanked the ACS for its work and reaffirmed the commitment of Panama to the ACS. He posited that the ACS should be flexible and that Member States should support the ACS Secretary General in his restructuring plans. The representative expressed his hope of improving maritime and air connectivity and his desire to sign an Agreement in this regard. He affirmed that Panama supports multilateralism. He stated that the work of the ACS enables greater trade and investment. He opined that more growth in the tourism sector will allow for greater competitiveness and sustainability. He noted that the tourism sector was vulnerable and had been affected by climate change and natural disasters and called, in this regard for greater attention to mobilising resources and protecting coastlines. He also opined that the work of the Caribbean Sea Commission is very important and that the Special Committee of Disaster Risk Reduction was linked to strengthening capacities and greater development of the Greater Caribbean region. He called for collaboration to find solutions to common problems and for a space for dialogue. He also encouraged an examination of the issue of sustainable development and climate change. He explained that policies that look at the vulnerability of communities and the threats of climate change was needed. He urged a change of typical practices and behaviours, noting that there must be resilience and solidarity among countries of the Greater Caribbean Region. He insisted on funds to strengthen capacities. Lastly, he congratulated Guatemala on its new Chairmanship.

With no objections, the Ministerial Council adopted the Report of the Secretary General.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORTS OF THE CHAIRMEN OF THE ACS SPECIAL COMMITTEES, AND THE CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION

The Chair advised that the Preparatory meeting had recommended these reports to the Ministerial Council.

The Chairs of the Special Committees summarised their respective reports.

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting to the 27th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council, the Council approved the following reports:

1. Chair of the Special Committee for **Disaster Risk Reduction**
2. Chair of the Special Committee for **Trade Development and External Economic Relations**
3. Chair of the Special Committee for **Transport**
4. Chair of the Special Committee for **Sustainable Tourism**
5. Chair of the **Special Committee for Cooperation and Resource Mobilisation**
6. Chair of the **Caribbean Sea Commission**

The Chairmen of the ACS Special Committees and the Caribbean Sea Commission are at **Annex.007 – Annex.012** to this report.

V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACS

The Representative of Costa Rica requested clarification on matters regarding the staff manual and pension fund and signalled general acceptance of the report.

There being no objections, and taking into consideration the recommendations and discussions of the Preparatory Meeting, the Report of the Chairman of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration for the period 2022-2023 was approved by the Ministerial Council.

The Report of the Chairman of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration is at **Annex.013** to this report.

VI. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT ORDINARY BUDGET OF THE ACS SECRETARIAT FOR THE BIENNIUM 2022-2023

Taking into consideration the recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting to the 27th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council, the Council approved the Ordinary Budget of the ACS for 2022-2023. The Draft Ordinary Budget of the ACS Secretariat for the Biennium 2022-2023 was approved by the Ministerial Council.

The Draft Ordinary Budget of the ACS is at **Annex.014** to this Report.

VII. CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT ACS PLAN OF ACTION 2022-28

The ACS Draft Plan of Action 2022-2028 as recommended by the Preparatory Meeting was circulated for consideration by the Ministerial Council.

There being no comments or objections, the ACS Plan of Action for the period 2022-2028 was approved.

The ACS Plan of Action 2022-28 is at **Annex.015** to this Report.

The Representative of Nicaragua greeted all participants and recognized the work, effort and leadership of the Chairman and the Secretary General in face of the pandemic in the area of administration and drafting the Plan of Action, which, he affirmed, reflected an ambitious route to transform the ACS towards becoming the

number one cooperation organisation in the Greater Caribbean. He welcomed the opportunity at hand to bring about valued change based on solidarity in the face of threats and challenges faced by the region including organised and transnational crime and the creation of economic blocks, the latter part of the policy of interventionism; the inclusion of our countries in financial risk lists and the arbitrary elimination of correspondent banking mechanisms; among other scourges that we must know how to face in a united and coordinated manner, with a single voice of rejection, denunciation and claim, to guarantee the faithful fulfillment of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

He added that in 2021, Nicaragua and The People's Republic of China took the step to re-establish diplomatic relations based on solidarity through the strengthening of multinationalism and expressed Nicaragua's support for China to be accepted as an Observer Country to the ACS, noting that they can assist with regard to the establishment of Maritime Routes, addressing poverty, the equitable distribution of vaccines, connectivity and communication. In this sense, Nicaragua reiterated its support for the accession of the People's Republic of China to the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) as an Observer Country, a position that we have repeatedly expressed since October 11, 2019.

He also expressed gratitude for the reports presented by the different Special Committees. He shared the same concerns raised by the Secretary General regarding the capacity of the ACS to comply and achieve its goals with the new Plan of Action. He added, the imperative need for Members to submit their payments to the ACS in order to address the financial deficit which hinders the ability to achieve tangible results. He extended thanks to Secretary General and underscored Nicaragua's expressed support for the principles espoused in the agreement which established the ACS and to guarantee the wellbeing of the people of the Greater Caribbean.

The complete intervention of Nicaragua is attached as **Annex.031** to this Report.

VIII. CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP STATUS IN THE ACS

The Meeting considered the approval of the following recommended applications for ACS membership:

- The Caribbean Doctors' Association as Social Actor
- Barcelona Logistic Centre as Social Actor

- The Caribbean Development Bank as Observer Organisation

With no objections, the Meeting approved each of the above- mentioned applications.

IX. ELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE ACS

The Chair invited members to view the matrix of nominees to hold positions on the Executive Boards of the ACS Special Committees as projected on screen. The meeting received the following nominations and observations regarding candidatures:

Regarding the Executive Board of the Ministerial Council:

The Representative of Panama presented its candidacy on the post of Rapporteur for the Ministerial Council.

The Representative of Mexico presented its candidacy for Vice Chair of Executive Board along with Jamaica, Venezuela and Colombia.

The Representative of Jamaica reiterated the need for representation of the four groups for the Executive Board of the Ministerial Council.

The Representative of Venezuela expressed his understanding of the rationale for Mexico participating in the Executive Board of the Ministerial Council and indicated support for Mexico to be Vice Chair of the Executive Board. As such, the Representative withdrew his country's candidacy for that Board but expressed interest for the Committee of Disaster Risk Reduction as Chair.

Regarding the Special Committee for Disaster Risk Reduction:

The Representative of Nicaragua expressed support for Venezuela candidacy for Chair for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The Representative of Colombia expressed her understanding of Mexico's role and withdrew candidacy as Vice Chair on the Executive Board of the Ministerial Council.

The Chair expressed thanks for the confidence and trust placed in Mexico, stated that Guatemala occupied Chairman and Panama Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction and that reflected representation from the various grouping.

The Representative of the Dominican Republic presented its candidacy for Vice Chair for the Committees on Sustainable Tourism, Disaster Risk Reduction and Budget and Administration.

The Chair stated the need for a candidate of Central America for Rapporteur and expressed Mexico's interest as they are working on the PITCA Project.

The Representative of Guyana withdrew candidature as Rapporteur for the Special Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Regarding the Special Committee for Transport:

The Chair indicated that there was no candidacy for Rapporteur of the Special Committee on Transport and welcomed Members to consider the possibility of fulfilling the vacancy.

The Representative of Nicaragua expressed thanks to Costa Rica for allowing his country the opportunity to occupy Chair on the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism.

Regarding the Special Committee for Trade:

The Representative of Honduras expressed its commitment to continue working in the area of preferential treatment for small economies.

The Representative of Dominican Republic indicated its firm interest in Chairing this Committee, noting that it had submitted its candidacy since February.

Regarding the Special Committee on Budget and Administration:

The Representative of Jamaica noted its early expression of interest in a position on this Board but finally withdrew its candidacy as Rapporteur.

The Chair thanked Members for their willingness to cooperate in that exercise.

The Representative of Barbados expressed candidacy as Rapporteur for the Special Committee on Transport.

The Representative of Martinique expressed commitment as Chair of the Special Committee on Transport.

Regarding the Special Committee for Cooperation and Resource Mobilisation:

The Representative of Costa Rica expressed interest in continuing the work it had executed last year and thus reapplied to continue working with Suriname. She thanked the Ambassadors of Suriname and Dominican Republic for allowing them to continue occupying the Chair.

The Representative of Dominican Republic noted Cuba as Vice Chair and Honduras as Chair in the Trade of Committee and expressed support for Honduras' candidature for Chair.

The Representative of Honduras thanked the Dominican Republic for allowing Honduras to be Chair of that Special Committee.

The Meeting received and approved the nominations for the Executive Boards of the Ministerial Council, Special Committees and the Caribbean Sea Commission as reflected in the matrix overleaf:

EXECUTIVE BOARDS	CHAIRMAN	VICE-CHAIRMAN	RAPPORTEUR
<i>Ministerial Council</i>	Guatemala	Jamaica Mexico	Panama
<i>Special Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction</i>	Venezuela	Trinidad and Tobago Dominican Republic	Mexico
<i>Special Committee on Transport</i>	Martinique	Guyana Venezuela	Barbados
<i>Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism</i>	Nicaragua	Jamaica Dominican Republic	Guyana
<i>Special Committee on Trade Development and External Economic Relations</i>	Honduras	Cuba Guyana	Suriname
<i>Special Committee on Budget and Administration</i>	Guatemala	Trinidad & Tobago Dominican Republic	Mexico
<i>Special Committee on Cooperation and Resource Mobilisation</i>	Costa Rica	Jamaica Colombia	Suriname
<i>Caribbean Sea Commission</i>	Trinidad and Tobago	Nicaragua Dominican Republic	ACS Secretariat

The Representative of Venezuela extended greetings to all meeting participants and stated that joint action was crucial for the stability of the Greater Caribbean especially in post pandemic recovery times of which has impacted human life and economic structures and thus expressed their solidarity. He expressed thanks to the work of Mexico in its capacity as Chair over the past year together with the Secretary General and its team in drafting the ACS Plan of Action (POA) tailored to the needs of the region and the CSC for their continued work and activity outlined in the POA. Moreover, he congratulated all new members that formed the Executive board for the incoming period 2022-2023 and expressed gratitude for the trust placed in these countries.

The Representative thanked Nicaragua for having earlier ceded its position to Venezuela. He argued that Members need to recognize the need to continue the revitalization of the ACS and to consolidate strategies to move forward. He asserted that the Plan of Action has outstanding strategic development objectives and the implementation of plans and responses would require commitment to focus on cooperating to meeting the needs of the region.

He added that Venezuela was pleased to have a flight from Caracas to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines which allowed for another connection between Latin America and the Caribbean. He posited the need to strengthen tourism and air connection opportunities for other countries such as Antigua and Barbuda and hoped to extend connectivity to other countries. He celebrated the ACS's role in promoting cooperation and solidarity amongst nations, and the Caribbean and Latin America Region to be viewed as a zone of peace. He mentioned the crucial need to foster cooperation among other nations in order to live in peace which was important for development and integration of the region. Finally, he extended congratulations to Cuba as host for the 6th International Cooperation Conference as cooperation continues to be key to the development of the region.

The Executive Boards of the Ministerial Council and Special Committees of the ACS is at **Annex.016** to this Report.

X. APPROVAL OF MINISTERIAL AGREEMENTS

The Meeting reviewed the draft Ministerial Agreements noting that in view of recommendations proffered by the Preparatory meeting, changes had been made to certain agreements, while others had been eliminated resulting in a reduced and renumbered list.

The Chair invited members to look at the agreements on screen.

In this regard, the following were presented for approval by the Ministerial Council:

- Agreement No. 1/22 - Agreement Approving the Reports of the Chairman of the Ministerial Council, the Secretary General, the Chairmen of the Special Committees, and the Caribbean Sea Commission of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

The change requested by the Secretariat was a change in the Spanish version.

- Agreement No. 2/22 - Agreement Approving the Budget of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) for 2022-2023
- Agreement No. 3/22 - Agreement Approving the Election of the Executive Board of the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)
- Agreement No. 4/22 - Agreement Approving the Composition of the Executive Boards of the Special Committees and the Board of the Caribbean Sea Commission of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)
- Agreement No. 5/22 – Agreement Approving the Caribbean Doctors' Association as a Social Actor within the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)
- Agreement No. 6/22 - Agreement Approving Barcelona Centre Logistic (BCL) as a Social Actor within The Association Of Caribbean States (ACS)
- Agreement No. 7/22 - Agreement Approving the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) as an Observer to the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)
- Agreement No. 8/22 - Agreement Approving an amendment to the Staff Manual of The Secretariat of The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and convene extraordinary meetings of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration and Ministerial Council in order to decide on outstanding matters of administration emanating from the 41st meeting of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration.

The Representative of Jamaica requested clarification on which amendment was specifically being addressed in Agreement 8/22.

The ACS Legal Advisor stated that the amendment had been agreed during the 41st meeting of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration and the 27th Preparatory Meeting of the Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council in reference to the definition of temporary employees and it is stated in the agreement.

The Representative of Jamaica suggested that the title clearly state that the Agreement sought to amend the definition temporary staff.

The title was adjusted on screen to reflect the comment of Jamaica.

Consequently Agreement 8/22 was amended to read Agreement Approving an Amendment to Temporary Staff in the Staff Manual of the Secretariat.

- Agreement No. 9/22 - Agreement Approving the Date and Venue of the 28th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS)
- Agreement No. 10/22 - Agreement to Approve 2022-2028 Plan of Action and the Arrangements For The Convening and Hosting of The 9th Summit of Heads Of State and/or Government and the 6th International Cooperation Conference of The Association of Caribbean States (AEC)
- Agreement No. 11/22 - Agreement Approving the Establishment of a Working Group to examine the conclusions of the report of the auditing firm Aegis Business Solutions
- Agreement No. 12/22 - Agreement Approving the Acceptance of Annual Membership Contributions to the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in Trinidad and Tobago and Euro Currencies
- Agreement No. 13/22 – To amend agreement 16/18 approving the terms of reference for the consultation, concerted action, adoption and follow-up processes for the declarations and plans of action of the ACS

The Representative of Jamaica requested clarification as to whether the current agreement 13/22 was the agreement 15/22 in the prior list.

The Chair confirmed that the current agreement 13/22 was agreement 10/22.

The Representative of Jamaica made reference to the agreement 10/22 which related to the Summit of 6 years and not the customary 3 years and recalled that the amendment was not made for the period of hosting summits. He suggested that it should read as the increase of Plans of Action for 3 years to 6 years and remove 'the convening of Summits'. ***This amendment was agreed by the meeting as proposed.***

There being no additional comments, ***each of the aforementioned Agreements was approved by the Ministerial Council with the recommended amendments to Agreements 8/22 and 10/22.***

The 2022 ACS Ministerial Agreements are attached as **Annex.017 – Annex.029** to this Report.

XI. DISCUSSION OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE 9TH SUMMIT OF THE ACS AND 6TH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION CONFERENCE

The Chair invited the Representative of Cuba to take the floor. **The Representative of Cuba** congratulated Secretary General Sabonge on his work and extended cordial greetings to the Member States present. He indicated Cuba's agreement with the Action Plan and the efforts in its drafting and also signalled his country's commitment to working towards the revitalisation of the organisation. He recalled that the 1st Cooperation Conference had been held in Cuba in March 2017 and anticipated with pleasure hosting the 6th International Cooperation Conference on 11th November, 2022. He urged the ACS to give a strong impetus to cooperation as part of efforts to improve the socio-economic stability of countries within the Greater Caribbean.

In closing, he invited participants to the International Expocaribe Fair that will be held in Santiago de Cuba from June 23 to 26 and the Havana International Fair that will take place from November 14 to 18 of this year, days after the VI Cooperation Conference of the ACS.

The meeting welcomed the offer of Cuba to host the 6th ACS International Cooperation Conference on 11th November, 2022.

XII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business under this agenda item.

CLOSING CEREMONY

The Chair invited the President of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), **Dr. Hyginus Leon** to offer remarks.

The Representative of the CDB greeted meeting participants, congratulated Guatemala on its assumption of Chairmanship and the ACS on its adoption of a results oriented Action Plan, and welcomed the opportunity to strengthen the partnership between as the ACS and CDB. He expressed particular excitement to be joining as an Observer at this time as the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) Ministerial Council adopted its first 6-year Plan of Action - a strategic, results-oriented development roadmap for which strong partnerships are necessary to deliver measurable progress.

He mentioned that the countries in the Caribbean Region are indeed at a crucial point on their potential development trajectory, one which calls for bold, urgent action founded on evidence-based decision making and a strengthening of partnerships for both knowledge creation and enhancing implementation capacity. He expressed that at CDB, the organisation embraced a strategic focus for sustainable development that is holistic and inclusive and founded on strong partnerships, and so was particularly keen on developing this Partnership for Results with the ACS, which is centred on improving the lives of the peoples of the Region.

Furthermore, he underscored that the CDB was keen to not only build innovative mechanisms and metrics to support the work of this cooperation hub, but to raise the necessary finance to enable it to play a transformative role in regional development. He noted that it was largely because of the recognition of the complementarity of their purposes as Caribbean regional institutions that he understood the Secretary General shared with Members the content of their first bilateral meeting. The meeting was sparked by his interest in our **Recovery Duration Adjuster (RDA)**, which has led to this point of institutional convergence on how to better promote our joint interests in the Region.

In closing, he expressed his appreciation of the trust placed in the CDB having been welcomed as an Observer Organisation to the ACS and looked forward to working with the Secretary General, the Secretariat, and the New Chair, Guatemala, whose Foreign Minister will formally assume office today, and have the responsibility for kick-starting the new ACS Action Plan with CDB as the newest Observer on the deck.

The remarks of the CDB President are at Annex.030 to this Report.

The Representative of Mexico, in his capacity as outgoing Chair presented brief closing remarks and took the opportunity to warmly welcome and thank the Republic of Guatemala for assuming the role of Chair of the Ministerial Council. He concluded by reiterating Mexico's support to the ACS Membership undertaking an active role as member and expressed his country's gratitude to the Secretary General.

The Representative of Guatemala, H.E. Mario Búcaro Flores, in his capacity of incoming Chair of the Ministerial Council, delivered brief remarks and thanked the government of Mexico for its excellent leadership and work. He indicated his country's commitment to working assiduously towards steering the ACS forward towards greater economic and sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean region.

The Chair thanked delegations for their participation and declared the meeting closed.