

**SECOND SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND/OR GOVERNMENT OF THE
STATES, COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
CARIBBEAN STATES**

Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Dominican Republic,
16-17 April 1999

DECLARATION OF SANTO DOMINGO

We, the Heads of State and/or Government of the States, Countries and Territories of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), meeting in the City of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Dominican Republic, on 16 and 17 April 1999;

Committed to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Convention Establishing the ACS, and recognising the validity of the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action on Tourism, Trade and Transport resulting from the historic First Summit held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, in August 1995 and the priorities identified for promoting regional integration, functional co-operation and co-ordination among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS;

Have decided to analyse the progress made by the ACS from Port-of-Spain 1995 to Santo Domingo 1999 and determine the projection of the Caribbean Region into the 21st Century; and therefore:

1. We identify tourism as the activity where the Association has achieved the most significant progress. We recognise that sustainable tourism constitutes an adequate response to the challenges of increasing rates of growth in employment and foreign exchange earnings, protecting and preserving the environment and natural resources, protecting cultural patrimony and values. We support community participation, as well as the involvement of local interests in aspects of the tourism development process, such as policy making, planning, management, ownership and the sharing of benefits generated by this activity. In this respect, we adopt the Declaration on the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC).
2. We reiterate our commitment to work jointly for the consolidation of an enhanced economic space for trade and investment, based on the principles of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), for which we shall continue to encourage integration and co-operation measures that permit the strengthening of intra-regional trade and investment.
3. We note with satisfaction the progress yielded in the area of trade liberalisation and economic integration in the sub-regional and bilateral spheres among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS. Within the framework of Article XX of the Convention Establishing the ACS, the interested

countries will continue to encourage according to their priorities, trade agreements and tariff preferences, as identified in the initiative to establish the Caribbean Preferential Tariff (CPT).

4. We reiterate that the rationalisation and definition of regional transport policies are among the highest priorities of the ACS Plan of Action. We consider that transport must be the fundamental instrument for the development of tourism and trade in the region. In this respect, we emphasise our commitment to the objectives of the programme "Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea".

5. Based on the fulfilment of commitments made in Agenda 21, we support the activities for the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources. In addition, we support the effort of CARICOM to have the Caribbean Sea declared a Special Area in the context of Sustainable Development, and instruct that this subject be included in the Caribbean Environmental Strategy. For this purpose, a high level meeting of experts will be convened to study this topic. Participation in this meeting will be open to all members of the Association.

6. We consider the Caribbean Sea an invaluable asset and agree to give special priority to its preservation. We therefore deplore its ecological degradation and reject its continuous use for the transport of nuclear and toxic waste that may in any way cause a greater degradation of the Caribbean Sea.

7. We express our deepest solidarity with the countries and territories of the ACS affected by natural disasters in recent years, as well as by the extensive losses of lives and material resources, caused by these phenomena, which have increased their difficulties in implementing their programmes of economic and social development.

8. We instruct the national authorities responsible for the prevention, mitigation and preparation for disasters, to put into practice, as soon as possible, the implementation mechanisms of the Regional Co-operation Agreement in the Area of Natural Disasters, signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. In this respect, special focus will be placed on strengthening co-operation with the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and the Central American Co-ordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters (CEPRENAC).

9. We emphasise the importance of co-operation in science and technology as the basis for the promotion of sustainable development of the region and in this respect, we observe with satisfaction the progress made in the development of the Co-operation Mechanism in the area of Science and Technology.

10. We recognise the efforts to widen regional collaboration and co-operation with respect to the linguistic integration programme, the promotion of the

teaching of the official languages of the ACS and the development of programmes of integration, co-operation and exchanges in the areas of education and culture. Similarly, we express our support for the activities being developed in the region with regard to the preservation of the cultural patrimony, and the promotion and defence of our cultural values.

11. We appreciate the importance of international co-operation for the development of the peoples and economies of the region, and we take note of the renewed effort by the ACS Special Fund to work in this direction.

12. We are aware that globalisation constitutes for the region an enormous challenge, that entails risks and opportunities. We therefore reiterate our interest in strengthening consultation and co-ordination of our positions in all those issues of mutual interest in the international agenda.

13. We agree that, faced with the rapid globalisation process, multilateralism is the indispensable response for dealing with its challenges and utilising its advantages, and in particular, for ensuring the effective exercise of the juridical equality of the States. We are aware moreover that the transparent and democratic functioning of multilateral bodies should be based on international law.

14. We reiterate our categorical rejection of all unilateral coercive measures, as well as the extraterritorial application of national laws by any State, since this is contrary to International Law, and moreover threatens the sovereignty of States and international co-existence. In this context, we reiterate our exhortation to the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the application of the Helms-Burton Law, in accordance with the Resolutions approved by the United Nations General Assembly.

15. We reaffirm our commitment to the preservation, consolidation and strengthening of democracy, political pluralism and the Rule of Law, as an ideal framework that allows respect for the defence and promotion of all human rights, including the right to development and basic liberties. In this respect, we reiterate that civic participation is an indispensable element in the creation of a new political culture. We also reiterate respect for the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention, in addition to the right of all peoples to build their own political system in peace, stability and justice.

16. We reiterate moreover the need to implement social and economic measures aimed at achieving integrated and harmonious development, based on equity, social justice, the raising of the standards of living of the population, and the eradication of poverty, with the human being as the fundamental focus of development plans.

17. We renew our commitment to work for the sustainable development of the Caribbean through co-operation and integration.

18. We recognise the differences in the size and levels of development of the economies of the countries of the ACS and attach special significance to the vulnerability of the small economies of our region. We will take into consideration these differences in the treatment of the countries in the activities being developed within the framework of the ACS. We will search for means, complementary with suitable internal policies that would afford opportunities to encourage participation and further the level of development of the small and less developed economies.

19. We urge the international community to strengthen programmes of technical and financial assistance, human resource training, and the transfer of technology, in order to improve the opportunities for the small and less developed economies to prosper in the international system.

20. In this context, we agree that there is a need to promote co-operation and concerted action among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS, so as to increase the negotiating capability of our region in international fora.

21. We reaffirm the principles adopted at the First ACS Summit, with regard to the international problem of the illicit traffic of drugs and related crimes, which represents a serious threat to tourism, trade and transport, and indeed, endangers the sovereignty and security of each State.

22. We reiterate the principles governing international co-operation for dealing with the international problem of the illicit traffic of drugs and related crimes, including shared responsibility, the global, integrated and balanced approach, unrestricted respect for the principles of International Law, in particular those of sovereignty and territorial integrity. We therefore strongly reject every type of intervention in the internal matters of States and the extraterritorial application of domestic laws and unilateral measures. In this respect, we agree that programmes, actions and results must be considered within an agreed intergovernmental framework.

23. We are aware of the great wealth of the cultural diversity in the Caribbean region and as a result, we agree to increase efforts in defence of our cultural identity, to protect and promote its expressions, given that culture is one of the fundamental bases for the integration of the Caribbean peoples.

24. We reiterate the commitment of our governments to work in close collaboration in order to contribute to the success of the European Union/Latin America and the Caribbean Summit, which constitutes an exceptional opportunity

for promoting concerted action among ACS Members, increasing co-operation and enhancing existing dialogues and agreements between the two regions. To this end, we will promote the Latin American and Caribbean proposal, adopted in Mexico City, in December 1998, aimed at identifying inter-regional co-operation activities that contribute to enhancing relations with the countries of the European Union.

25. This Summit will also be a special occasion to establish a direct and frank dialogue with the leaders of the European Union, in order to advance in a decisive manner economic relations between both regions, especially in the areas of trade and investment, as well as to promote the convergence of efforts to restore international financial stability and to redress the continued imbalances that might provoke a global recession.

26. We call for the optimisation of the potential and opportunities provided by the sectoral links among the programmes of the ACS and collaboration with relevant regional and national organisations, in order to ensure increasing complementarity among the activities of Member States and Associate Members.

27. We express our deep gratitude to the President of the Dominican Republic, His Excellency Leonel Fernández, and to the Government and people of the Dominican Republic, for the warmth, friendliness and lavish hospitality accorded to us throughout the Second Summit.

To give impetus to the goals and objectives outlined in this Declaration, we agree to adopt and execute the attached Plan of Action.

SECOND SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND/OR GOVERNMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

PLAN OF ACTION

1. TOURISM

On establishing the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC) as a means of promoting the expansion of tourism on the basis of sustainability and to facilitate the overall development of the Caribbean region, the following activities must be carried out immediately:

1.1 Implement the strategies outlined in the "Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of the STZC", signed by the Foreign Ministers and in the approved Immediate Plan of Action, which must be co-ordinated and executed by Tourism Ministries or Corporations and other competent bodies, and are defined in the following areas:

Culture and Identity

Community Participation

Environment

Technology for Sustainability

Economic Policies and Instruments

Tourism Marketing

Education

Legal Framework

Sustainability indicators

Air and Maritime Transport

Co-ordination with the private sector

Information Centre

1.2 Request that the relevant public sector entities begin to implement the actions considered immediate in this Plan, in close collaboration with the private sector and the other actors involved.

2. TRADE

Follow up the mandates issued by the First Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, regarding trade liberalisation, investment promotion and facilitation and inter-institutional co-operation among the members of the Association of Caribbean States.

2.1 Trade liberalisation.

Within the framework of Article XX of the Convention Establishing the ACS, which allows Member States to undertake initiatives and conclude integration agreements among themselves, whenever these are consistent with the purposes and functions of this Convention, the countries concerned, according to their priorities, shall continue to promote bilateral trade agreements and preferential tariffs as identified in the initiative to establish the Caribbean Preferential Tariff (CPT).

Continue the task of identifying and then removing obstacles to intra-regional trade. To this end, business organisations in our countries shall be consulted.

Prepare an annual progress report on the bilateral and sub-regional integration process. This report must be presented at Ordinary Meetings of the Ministerial Council, once it has been approved by the Committee.

2.2 Trade and investment promotion and facilitation.

Promote Permanent Business Fora in the Caribbean.

Guarantee that any officially promoted regional business forum is done in consultation with the Special Committee so that such events can be promoted as much as possible among the countries of the Caribbean, thereby facilitating contacts among the businessmen of the region.

Prepare every six months a directory of Internet resources by subject area, containing useful information for the development of trade and investment, identifying national or regional sources which provide information on trade and investment trends and opportunities, and ensuring that this directory is available on the ACS Home Page.

Design a trade facilitation programme at the regional level which could include trade promotion and development services as well as information on facilitating access to other markets.

Convene a meeting of the trade and investment promoting organisations of the Caribbean, which would exchange experiences and identify possible areas of co-

operation, within the framework of the Special Committee on Trade Development and External Economic Relations.

2.3 Vulnerability of small economies.

Identify measures for the establishment of special and differential treatment for the small economies of the region within the framework of the different aspects of trade being negotiated. There will be taken, as a point of reference, negotiations carried out or ongoing in the countries of the ACS and any other study or experience of negotiation in which ACS Members have been involved.

Promote technical and financial assistance for the countries of the Caribbean

region considered small economies, particularly in the areas of legislation, institutional development, training, implementation of studies, and information infrastructure equipment, in accordance with the priorities defined by the countries.

2.4 Training programmes for negotiators.

Develop training programmes with the support of specialised agencies and academic institutions, with special emphasis on the training of professional teams of negotiators in trade-related disciplines, both at the public and private sector levels.

3. TRANSPORT

In the process of integrating both air and maritime transport, and to consolidate the Programme "Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea", the following priority action must be taken:

3.1 Form a group of experts to work on the definition of general elements to evaluate the possibility of adopting a common air transport policy in the ACS, which would foster increased functional co-operation and improvement of airport services, to be submitted to the proposed Meeting of Transport Ministers.

3.2 Instruct Ministers responsible for the area of Transport to meet with the aim of seeking closer political and technical relations that would make it possible to achieve the objectives of the Programme "Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea".

3.3 Follow up on the tasks assigned during the First Meeting of Airline Executives and Aviation Authorities of the Region, convened by the ACS, particularly those linked to the implementation of functional co-operation among Caribbean airlines.

3.4 Promote among ACS Members the study of the different modalities of agreements for establishing the "Common Air Policy in the Caribbean", based on research carried out by the Committee.

3.5 Continue working towards a definition of transshipment and cargo distribution centres in the ACS, with the aim of optimising the use of the most adequate ports and port services in the region, thereby promoting intra-regional trade.

3.6 Promote the use of electronic navigation maps with the aim of having dependable instruments for the detection of specific areas of risks and resources in the sea, and to increase the safety of maritime navigation in the Caribbean.

3.7 Promote multi-modal transport within the region in order to increase efficiency and reduce the costs of maritime transport, which will result in increased intra-regional trade in goods.

3.8 Promote training activities for maritime operators and the development of human resources, through co-operation agreements between regional technical training centres and those in Members of the ACS that offer such facilities.

3.9 Elaborate a directory of companies specialised in the business of maritime transport, which would facilitate a reliable regional data base, which would permit continuous updating.

3.10 Urge ACS Members party to international conventions on safety at sea, the prevention of pollution by boats, and standards of training, certification and maritime vigilance, to comply with these conventions.

3.11 Convene a meeting of providers of maritime services with the aim of complementing efforts to make their activities commercially viable and profitable.

3.12 Encourage ACS Members which have not yet done so, to accede to, ratify or adhere to, as the case may be, the FAL Convention of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), with the aim of establishing uniform systems and facilitating international maritime traffic among them.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

To implement the Caribbean Environmental Strategy in the shortest possible time, in fulfilment of the principle enshrined in the Convention Establishing the ACS, to preserve the integrity of the Caribbean Sea as an asset common to the countries of the region, the following action must be undertaken:

4.1 Define an appropriate communication methodology for co-ordinating common positions of ACS Members, in specialised fora on the subject.

4.2 Encourage the exchange of experience on the environmentally sustainable use of traditional sources of energy and the generation of alternative energy .

4.3 Promote measures for ACS Members to access the United Nations technical assistance and information programmes - SIDS/TAPS and SIDS/NET.

4.4 Promote training, education and sensitisation programmes on environmental protection and natural resources at primary, secondary, tertiary and community levels, in co-ordination with the Special Committees on Science, Technology, Health, Education and Culture, and on Tourism.

4.5 Co-ordinate action for obtaining technical and financial assistance from regional and international institutions specialised in the protection of forestry resources and protected natural areas.

4.6 Foster the creation and/or strengthening of National Sustainable Development Councils, to encourage fulfilment of the commitments made under Agenda 21.

4.7 Encourage the presentation to the ACS Special Fund of innovative, low-cost projects which facilitate the participation of civil society, in alliance with local governments, for environmental protection and management, conservation of biological diversity, and natural resources management.

4.8 Promote that planning policies of ACS Members be aimed at integrating environmental matters, land use policies, and disaster prevention and mitigation, in the context of sustainable development.

5. NATURAL DISASTERS

With the aim of implementing the Regional Co-operation Agreement on Natural Disasters, signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the following actions will be undertaken:

5.1 Recommend to the Ministerial Council that, as stipulated in the request made by the Special Group on Natural Disasters, the possibility of elevating that Group to the status of a Special Committee be analysed, bearing in mind the importance of the subject and the presence in the region of existing co-ordination mechanisms, particularly the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and the Centre for the Co-ordination of Disaster Prevention in Central America (CEPREDENAC).

5.2 Instruct the Special Committee responsible for the subject of Natural Disasters to implement and follow up on the "Regional Co-operation Agreement on Natural Disasters".

5.3 Develop mechanisms to enable the Association to become a forum to secure political support to reinforce actions taken by governments and regional agencies specialised in disaster management, particularly CDERA and CEPREDENAC.

6. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

6.1 Develop the Mechanism for Co-operation in Science and Technology, taking into account the need for it to be closely linked to the initiative for the creation of the STZC, as well as those related to other areas considered priorities in the Declaration of Santo Domingo. This should require concentration of efforts on those tasks aimed at:

Creating and consolidating a scientific and technological culture at all social levels in such a way as to generate the conditions for its permanent modernisation;

Supporting basic and applied research through the substantial increase in investment in infrastructure and the training of scientists and engineers in charge of Research and Development (R&D) activities;

Promoting the creation of intramural R&D capacities in companies;

Encouraging dialogue between academic institutions and industry and increasing co-operation and exchanges between them;

Forming regional alliances to analyse common problems through regional and national R&D institutions;

Promoting access of developing countries to modern technology and specialised knowledge, including the possibility of the transfer of technology.

6.2 Execute the projects on coastal eco-systems and the evaluation of the impact of the change in sea levels on ground water reserves of the Caribbean islands, as well as the incorporation of their results into the policy formation process of our respective governments.

6.3 Identify the possibilities offered by scientific and technological networks in which ACS Members participate, trying to maximise their potential and complement them where possible, with specific actions generated and executed within the framework of the ACS.

7. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Taking into account that access to information and telecommunications constitutes a strategic element for regional integration, it is necessary to develop a strategic plan aimed at networking the region using the most advanced technologies. To achieve this, we agree to:

7.1 Establish a virtual telecommunications network, using the Internet and facilities of existing telecommunications providers, in order to connect ACS Members and facilitate the holding of electronic conferences and virtual meetings, which would provide a dynamic and low cost medium of electronic communication and greater access to information.

7.2 Consolidate initiatives geared towards improving communication between the Secretariat, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and diplomatic missions. At a later stage, the range of users of the network would extend to the social actors connected with the Association.

7.3 Give priority to the initiatives undertaken by Governments that would help to prepare the region for the Y2K problem.

7.4 Support the consolidation of the Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Information System (SICLAC).

8. HEALTH

Instruct the health authorities of ACS Members to co-operate with the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) in designing an epidemiological strategy and a regional programme for co-operation in emergent and re-emergent diseases, with the support of national and regional health institutions. The definition of this strategy and programmes will be realised through the convening of a meeting of national health authorities of ACS Members.

9. EDUCATION

9.1 Create a working group, comprising governmental authorities, to co-ordinate the official education institutions in order to carry out a study on educational standards and certification levels in the technical schools and universities of the region.

9.2 Support the convening of the Second Meeting of University Authorities of the Members of the ACS, with the mandate of studying the possibility of formulating proposals for the establishment and monitoring of these standards and levels.

9.3 Foster inter-university co-operation, particularly with regard to the development of human resource training programmes in the tourism sector.

9.4 Promote co-operation among university centres for Latin American and Caribbean Studies in the region, with the aim of encouraging research, student and lecturer exchanges, scholarships, assistantships and sabbaticals for teaching staff from these institutions.

9.5 Promote measures whereby educational institutions, tourism and cultural development agencies can implement the specialised programmes of the Centres of Excellence specialising in the teaching of the official languages of the ACS.

10. CULTURE

10.1 Promote the convening of a forum on the Caribbean region for reflection on its future and in the context of the new millennium.

10.2 Design a calendar of cultural events and a guide of public and private cultural institutions of ACS Members, through national cultural organisations, tourism development agencies, transport operators, with a view to increasing cultural integration and mutual knowledge, as well as the promotion of intra-regional tourism.

10.3 Design a programme of activities for the cultural integration of the Caribbean region, in collaboration with national and international agencies drawn from this sector, aimed at fostering a better understanding of the culture, patrimony and identity of our countries.

10.4 Request the active participation of countries in the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) to be held in St. Kitts and Nevis in the year 2000.

11. SPECIAL FUND

Bearing in mind the importance of strengthening the ACS Special Fund, as a means of ensuring the execution of activities identified for technical co-operation and research, projects which meet the necessary standards will be presented to international sources of co-operation and financing. Methods of promoting and fine-tuning the negotiation of agreements between the Association and potential co-operating countries and organisations will be sought.

INSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

12.1 Carry out a detailed analysis of the finances and administration of the Secretariat for the period 1996-1999, to be presented for evaluation at the Fifth Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council, to be held in Panama, in December 1999.

12.2 Examine the results of the report on the finances and the mandates emanating from the Declaration of Santo Domingo, in order to revise the ACS budget heads to be applied from the year 2000, for which a proposal should be presented for the consideration of the Fifth Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council.

12.3 Strengthen ties with the Founding Observers (CARICOM, SICA, SIECA and SELA) and other regional organisations within the ACS framework of action, to ensure the development of collaboration programmes and avoid the duplication of efforts.

The execution of this Plan of Action will require a common effort, which will be complemented with resources from international co-operation. This will be promoted through the ACS Special Fund in accordance with its Operational Regulations and Project Presentation Manual.