FIFTH SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND/OR GOVERNMENT OF THE STATES, COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

Karibe Hotel, Pétion Ville, Haiti
April 26th, 2013

DECLARATION OF PÉTION VILLE

Revitalizing the Vision of the Association of Caribbean States
For a Stronger and more United Greater Caribbean

The Heads of State and/or Government of the States, Countries and Territories of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), meeting in Pétion Ville, Haiti, on the 26th day of April, 2013:

Committed to the principles and objectives set forth in the Convention Establishing the ACS;

Reaffirming their commitment to the Declaration of Principles and its Plan of Action emanating from the historic First Summit of ACS Heads of State and/or Government, held in Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on August 17 and 18, 1995 and the priorities identified to promote regional co-operation and coordination among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS;

Reaffirming their commitment to the Declaration of the Second Summit, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on April 16 and 17, 1999, which analyzed the progress made from Port of Spain to Santo Domingo, and determined the projection of the Caribbean Region into the 21st century;

Reaffirming their commitment to the Declaration of the Third Summit, held in Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on December 11 and 12, 2001, which

promoted the consolidation of a Greater Caribbean Identity that would strengthen the ACS as a forum for consultation, concerted action and co-operation;

Reaffirming their commitment to the Declaration of the Fourth Summit, signed in Panama City, Republic of Panama, on July 29, 2005, which reflected upon the evolution of the ACS, its achievements and challenges on the occasion of its Tenth Anniversary;

Declare that they,

1. Have met with the objective of ratifying the founding vision of the Association, and commit once again to consolidating and promoting it so that their efforts may lead to the development of successful co-operation policies, programmes and projects aimed at creating a stronger and more united Greater Caribbean.

2. Are resolute with regard to the need to maintain the relevance of their Association as a body for consultation, concerted action, co-operation while stressing the relevance of its work in the domains of trade, sustainable tourism, transport, disaster risk reduction, in order to realize its space on the current multilateral and regional global sphere.

3. Recognize the great wealth of the cultural diversity of the Caribbean Region and as a result, agree to intensify efforts in defence of their cultural identity, to protect and promote its expressions, given that culture and is one of the fundamental bases for cooperation in the Greater Caribbean. In that regard, welcome the convening of the Caribbean Festival of Arts, "CARIFESTA XI", in the Republic of Suriname on August 16-25, 2013, under the theme "Culture for Development, Celebrating our Diversity and Promoting the Central Role of Culture in Economic, Social, and Human Development." Agree that this event is an opportune occasion for the expression and celebration of the greater cultural wealth and diversity in the Greater Caribbean.

4. Reiterate their will to accomplish the Mandates of previous Summits with regard to working in the areas of cultural patrimony, education, science and technology in the Greater Caribbean.

5. Acknowledge the achievements of the ACS, as well as its efforts to attain them. It is important to continue to strengthen the Association's capacity for bringing together all its countries and territories, so as to consolidate the ACS in the region, and to this end, promote the use of new information technologies.

6. Reaffirm the need to have a strategy that would strengthen the Association's programmes and projects, working together toward a common goal and with the primary objective of producing tangible results with an impact on regional development.

7. Reiterate their conviction that democracy, based on popular participation, equitable economic and social development, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, and respect for the Rule of Law, is the essential principle which informs their governments.

8. Reiterate their firm commitment to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, including the sovereignty of nations, the respect of their territorial integrity and the non-interference in their internal affairs and likewise reaffirming the right of each people to live in peace, stability and justice, and to define their own political system.

9. In this context, they reiterate yet again their appeal to the Government of the United States of America to end the application of the Helms-Burton Law, in conformity with the 20 pertinent resolutions approved within the United Nations General Assembly, its most recent being No. A/RES/67/4 of November 2012, entitled "*Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba – Report of the Secretary General (A/67/118)*", and to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against their sister nation, Cuba.

10. Reaffirm their condemnation of all acts of terrorism, in all forms and manifestations, wherever they are committed and by whomever they are committed. They commit to continue reinforcing co-operation between states, in order to prevent, repress and eliminate this threat in an efficient manner.

11. Reject strongly unilateral evaluations, lists and certifications, in particular, those referring to terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking and others of similar nature.

12. Express their commitment to the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), created in February 2010 at Riviera Maya, Mexico, and reaffirm the validity of the agreements outlined in the Foundational Summit of CELAC,

held in Caracas, Venezuela in December 2011, as well as the Declaration of the 1st Summit of CELAC, adopted on January 28, 2013 in Santiago, Chile.

13. Acknowledge the commitment expressed by the Heads of Government of CARICOM at their 23rd Intersessional Meeting, held in Suriname on March 8-9, 2012 for the CELAC process and applaud CARICOM's efforts to foster and advance integration initiatives in the Region.

14. Acknowledge the recognition of the ACS by CARICOM's Council for Foreign and Community Relations (COFCOR) at its 15th Meeting in May 2012, at which it pledged to strengthen relations with the Association and continue close collaboration with, and active participation in, the Association.

15. Recognize the integration efforts advanced in the region such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Central American Integration System (SICA), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA)-Exchange Treaty of the People (ALBA-ETP), PETROCARIBE, MesoAmerica Integration and Development Project, the Pacific Alliance, and Union of South American Nations (UNASUR),as integration schemes with high social content, based on the principles of social justice, complementarity and co-operation.

16. Recognize the establishment of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union (OECS-EU) and the subsequent inauguration of the Regional Assembly of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) in Antigua and Barbuda during the month of August 2012.

17. Recognize the efforts of the international community in support of, and in solidarity with, Haiti, and urge the fulfilment of avowed commitments towards Haiti's economic and social development and reconstruction efforts, in accordance with the interests and decisions of the Haitian Government.

18. Take note of the results of the 24th Intersessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of State and Governments of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) held on February 18th and 19th, 2013 in Haiti.

19. Reiterate their commitment to preserve the Caribbean Sea as the common patrimony of the people of the Region, and consider fundamental the permanence and consolidation of the Caribbean Sea Commission. They recognize the contributions made in this regard by the Member States of the ACS, particularly Barbados during the terms served as Chair of the afore-mentioned Commission; as well as observer countries and institutions that have collaborated closely with the Commission. They welcome and take note of the international support and recognition received by the Caribbean Sea Commission, and in particular its mention in the Report of January 2012, published by the United Nations Secretary General's High Level Panel on Global Sustainability.

20. Reaffirm the importance of the Caribbean Sea as a resource for the economic development and well-being of their people, as well as the decision to continue to support the efforts of the ACS in developing and implementing regional initiatives for the protection and preservation of this patrimony.

21. Recognizing that the international arena is enriched by an increase in the number of regional and international bodies and fora which provide new opportunities and horizons to initiate consultations and manage cooperation and funding, the ACS must use this opportunity to strengthen its relations with its existing partners, and intensify its efforts to forge new relations in order to increase cooperation. To that end, they encourage the Secretary General to capitalize on these new opportunities through the full utilization of the resources of the Secretariat.

22. Instruct the immediate implementation by the Council of National Representatives of the Special Fund of Agreement 9/13, approved by the 18th Ordinary Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council, for the strengthening of institutional, budgetary, and organizational aspects of the Special Fund, in accordance with its objectives.

23. Recognize the vulnerability of Member States to disasters due to natural phenomena, and their negative impact on efforts geared toward achieving sustainable development. It is therefore agreed that the best way to tackle this vulnerability is by incorporating comprehensive disaster risk management into all levels of public planning in our countries, including steps for regional and international co-operation.

24. Recall and support the updating and revalidation of the Saint-Marc Plan of Action and its 27 points, defined during the High Level Conference on Disaster Reduction of the Association of Caribbean States held in November 2007 in Saint-Marc, Republic of Haiti, as the guide for the ACS Work Programme in the area of disaster risk reduction.

25. Recognize that natural phenomena such as hurricanes, tropical storms, floods and severe drought, whose magnitude and frequency tend to increase with the effects of climate change, result in disasters in the Greater Caribbean Region, given the level of exposure and vulnerability of the communities, and thus have serious implications for the economies of their countries. Consequently, they urge that actions be continued to promote the reduction of disaster risks and adapting to climate change. They further agree that governments must play a key role in promoting and facilitating the production and utilization of eco-efficient and environmentally friendly products, tools and processes for managing, responding to, and recovering from, disasters.

26. Acknowledge and support the close collaboration of the ACS with specialized regional organisations, such as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC), the United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), among others.

27. Recognize the importance of establishing mechanisms to facilitate and expedite the dispatch, receipt and distribution of humanitarian assistance in cases of disasters according to the established legal order in each country, as they urge the ACS to conduct activities that will permit the strengthening of coordinated disaster management action and for the benefit of the victims affected by such disasters. In the framework of their capabilities and resources, they will continue to strive to address the risks to which they are exposed, in an effective, efficient and timely fashion.

28. Recommend the further development of the various modes of transportation by land, air and sea transport, as well as air and sea connectivity which contribute to strengthening the unification of the nations of the Greater Caribbean. In this regard, they highlight the entry into force on September 19, 2008, of the Air Transport Agreement among the Member States and Associate Members of the

ACS. They further recognize the implementation of the Project: "Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean", and acknowledge the significance of the "Caribbean Maritime Port Strategy", proposed with a view to producing a competitive maritime sector that is able to meet the foreign trade needs of the Greater Caribbean.

29. Promote and make an appeal for the incorporation of gender, as cross-cutting themes, into the policies, plans and actions related to the priority programs of the ACS.

30. Commit to encourage in the same way, policies of social integration, in particular, in favour of children, youth, people with reduced capacity and the elderly.

31. Urge Member States that still have not done so, to ratify the Convention Establishing the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC) and its Protocol, so that both instruments can enter into force. Similarly, they are committed to hasten the implementation of the attendant commitments within the framework of the STZC. They believe that this initiative will promote the advancements made by the Greater Caribbean in incorporating the principles of sustainable development into integrated tourism planning at the global level.

32. In view of the ACS mandate as it relates to the thematic area of Trade and the intent of Caribbean Leaders to create a consolidated economic space in the region; and taking into account the present state of the World Trading System, they support the efforts of this organization, in order to increase trade and investment in the Greater Caribbean Region. To this end, they encourage the spirit of continued collaboration and consultation between ACS members and the founding observers related to economic development, such as the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) among others. In this regard, they recognize the need to facilitate the increased movement of people among and within the Members States of the ACS.

33. Point out the importance of promoting co-operation in order to stimulate trade in services among the Member States as an important contributor to the creation of a consolidated economic space. To this end, possibilities of supply and demand will have to be identified within the region and promotion of

actions fostering increased opportunities and the diversification of trade exchanges within the Association.

34. Acknowledge the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to promote economic advancement in the region through the creation of a structured Convergence Process with the objectives being a greater facilitation of the movement of capital and services, to promote the establishment of mechanisms to protect investments within the region, the integration of capital markets, the development of infrastructure to improve logistics and explore with international financial institutions the reorientation of their policies in order to support the less developed countries with regard to the shifts in the international economy and maintain macroeconomic stability.

35. Recognize the importance of SMEs, as one of the factors that can contribute to the process of economic recovery in the region by their ability to promote employment and market opportunities. Consequently, mechanisms of dialogue should be promoted among agencies specializing in this field, in order to benefit from the sharing of those experiences and good practices which have been successful in the region, so that they can be shared where necessary.

36. Receive favourably the will of the French Regions of the Caribbean to become Associate Members of the ACS in their own name, and commend their active participation in several of the Special Committees of the Association.

37. Celebrate the election of the Secretary General of the Association of Caribbean States, Dr. Alfonso David Múnera Cavadía, in February 2012, and are confident that his efforts, given the work done so far, will redound to the benefit of the Association.

38. Express to the Government and People of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, their deep and sincere sorrow over the sad passing of President Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, on March 5, 2013. President Hugo Chavez always demonstrated a deep love and respect for the people of the Greater Caribbean. We recognize and appreciate his commitment to the region and efforts to build strong means of co-operation that help to improve the quality of life of our people, strengthen the integration and tighten the ties of friendship among our governments.

39. Express, during this V Summit, their admiration for the nation of Haiti people. The world owes a debt of gratitude to the Haitian people who were the first to completely abolish slavery, and so establish the possibility of citizenship for all human beings.

40. Manifest their deepest appreciation to the President of the Republic of Haiti, His Excellency Michel Joseph Martelly, and to the Government and People of Haiti, for their warm welcome and hospitality during this 5th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the Association of Caribbean States.

In order to promote the goals and objectives set forth in this Declaration, the Heads of State and/or Government of the ACS agree to adopt and execute the Plan of Action attached, and instruct the Ministerial Council, in accordance with Article VIII of the Convention Establishing the Association of Caribbean States, to continuously monitor and evaluate its implementation at its next Ordinary Meeting, to guarantee its execution in the shortest time possible.

Done at Pétion-Ville, Haiti this Twenty-sixth Day of April 2013 in a single copy in the English, French and Spanish language, each text being equally authentic.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the representatives duly authorized in that regard have signed this Document:

for the Government of the

Commonwealth of The Bahamas

for the Government of Barbados

for the Government of Belize

for the Government of the

Republic of Colombia

for the Government of the

Republic of Costa Rica

for the Government of the

Republic of Cuba

for the Government of the

Commonwealth of Dominica

for the Government of the

Dominican Republic

for the Government of the
Republic of El Salvador

for the Government of Grenada

for the Government of the
Republic of Guatemala

for the Government of the
Cooperative Republic of Guyana

for the Government of the
Republic of Haiti

for the Government of the
Republic of Honduras

for the Government of Jamaica

for the Government of
the Republic of Nicaragua

for the Government of the
Republic of Panama

for the Government of
Saint Kitts and Nevis

for the Government of
Saint Lucia

for the Government of
the Republic of Suriname

for the Government of
the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

for the Government of the
Republic of the United Mexican States

for the Government of the
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

For the Government of the Republic of France
(in respect of Guadeloupe, Martinique,
French Guiana, Saint Martin and Saint Barthelemy)

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

PLAN OF ACTION OF PÉTION VILLE

The tasks contained in the following Plan of Action of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) shall be completed within a two-year period for the years 2013 and 2014. The Secretariat shall present regular reports and recommendations on the implementation of this Plan of Action to the Ministerial Council and its subsidiary organs, which will decide on action to be taken and possible modifications to be made, bearing in mind changes in circumstances.

All Member States and Associate Members are urged to support the projects and activities identified herein.

1. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1.1 **Establishment of the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Greater Caribbean (STZC).** This is the flagship project of the ACS Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism which seeks the establishment and recognition of the Greater Caribbean as a Region that supports and promotes the Sustainable development of Tourism. Implementation of this project currently in the third phase of execution will include the establishment of support mechanisms, conducting studies and research and establishing regional and international linkages to enhance the profile, visibility and value of the STZC. These activities are expected to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices among STZC Stakeholders, and also support consultation and integrated planning for the further development of the STZC.

1.2 **Annual Regional Tourism Safety and Security Capacity-building Seminar.** To facilitate dialogue and cooperation among Tourism, National Security and Disaster Management Agencies on issues related to crime and harassment against tourists, and also to contribute to the development of coordinated and integrated response mechanisms and strategies in relation to disaster and risk mitigation and management, an Annual Regional Tourism Safety and Security Capacity-building workshop and/or seminar will be hosted. The First Annual Seminar will be hosted in collaboration with the Tourism Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago.

1.3 **Implementation of a Tourism Policing Project.** This project seeks to deliver training, technical assistance and subsequently documentation to increase the competencies of law enforcement and tourism stakeholders in the Greater Caribbean Region, in the area of visitor safety and security, while also creating employment opportunities for the youth. This project will include a Survey and Study on Tourism Policing in the Greater Caribbean Region, which will inform the development of a Regional Best-Practice Framework and Curriculum on Tourism Policing. It is expected to subsequently implement a pilot training project comprising of a mix of ACS Member States with due consideration to the geographical and linguistic representation. Implementation of this project will facilitate the transfer of knowledge, best practices and experiences of countries with Tourism Police units utilising knowledge exchange mechanisms and co-operation.

1.4 **Establishment of the Centre for the Promotion of Languages and Cultures of the Greater Caribbean (CPLC).** The objective of this project is to prioritize the implementation of student exchange programs among the countries of the ACS for language training and cultural immersion. As such, this project is aimed at promoting the cultural diversity of the region and strengthening the language skills of nationals

in the main languages spoken in the Greater Caribbean: English, French, and Spanish; and also to foster the learning of the Creole language and culture as well as the other indigenous languages and cultures of the Greater Caribbean.

1.5 **Forum of Airline and Tourism Executives for the Promotion Multi-Destination Tourism in the Greater Caribbean.** To promote multi-destination tourism, intra-regional travel and facilitate synergies between the tourism and transport sectors, the project, *Forum of Airline and Tourism Executives for the Promotion Multi-Destination Tourism in the Greater Caribbean: Exploring Closer Ties & Opportunities for Connectivity* will be implemented. Activities for the upcoming period include, hosting of a Meeting of Airline Executives and Regional Tourism and Transport Authorities and commissioning of a Study which collates the diverse regional approaches to MDT, with recommendations for a Greater Caribbean MDT Strategy. The First Regional Dialogue will be held in collaboration with the Latin American and Caribbean Air Transport Association (ALTA) and the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO). These activities are expected to, inter-alia, increase partnerships and linkages between the tourism and air transport sectors and further advances the dialogue on issues pertaining to connectivity within and access to the region.

1.6 **Cruise Tourism and Entrepreneurial Strengthening in the Greater Caribbean: Opportunities for Women.** This project will seek to deliver training and capacity building tools to women with Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the tourism industry, and tools for training and capacity building. Activities for the period will include a Study on the role and contribution of women in the Tourism Sector in Greater Caribbean and development of a Training Program Curriculum. Subsequently, a Regional Training Workshop and Symposium will be conducted. This project is expected to highlight the importance of cruise

tourism as an engine for the socio-economic development of women; transfer knowledge and resources for capacity-building geared towards entrepreneurial strengthening of women with MSMEs in the tourism industry; and more importantly, showcase women-owned MSMEs to generate interest, exposure and opportunities for increased business.

2. TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

2.1 **Elimination and Reduction of Obstacles and Challenges to Trade Facilitation within the Greater Caribbean Region.** This project will focus on holding Technical Meetings of the Working Groups on Customs Facilitation and the Issuance of Business Visas; and the promotion of the implementation of the UNCTAD E-Regulations Programme. The expected results would be the Signing of an Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding to govern the exchange, sharing, and interface of customs information and procedures, with particular reference to the advance electronic remission of merchandise declarations for export, and other areas of interest among Member States, as well as the creation of an information portal to facilitate access to information on the movement of Business Persons.

2.2 **Convening of an Annual Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean, as well as the Forum of Trade Promotion Organizations.** With these two Fora, it is anticipated that trade, investment, and the exchange of knowledge will be promoted among businessmen, business-women and entrepreneurs of the Greater Caribbean. They will also encourage discussions on relevant topics on the Region's Trade Agenda aimed at expanding and strengthening trade relations.

2.3 **The Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Greater Caribbean.** This project is designed mainly to create and expand job opportunities, and alleviate unemployment in the countries of the ACS. To this end, an annual seminar will be convened involving expert entities and MSMEs of the region, to discuss the importance of the sector and identify opportunities for development in ACS Member States. Based on the outcomes of this seminar, a document will be developed for the exchange of good practices.

2.4 **The Empowering of Women Through Trade** through the holding of an Annual Seminar in order to promote from a gender perspective, the strengthening of capabilities of women entrepreneurs, their economic autonomy and provide the gender sensitive tools necessary to address matters related to the challenges and obstacles of managing MSMEs, resulting in the increased capacity and skills of women entrepreneurs and small business owners. By means of this Seminar, it is anticipated that knowledge will be acquired in respect of avenues for accessing finance, and new technologies.

2.5 **Promotion of the convergence and deepening of Trade within the ACS through new schemes**. Update the study on the actual and potential flow of trade in the ACS Region, and the identification, compilation and execution of existing and new related cooperation activities within the Region.

2.6 **The strengthening of the Caribbean Development Bank (CARIBANK)** to expand its participation and activities in all countries of the ACS. In this regard, Mexico is willing to collaborate with the Caribbean Bank to seek the necessary tools and/or mechanisms through the Yucatan Agreement for the financing of infrastructural plans or work in the Greater Caribbean.

3 TRANSPORT

The programme **"Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea"** will be implemented through actions in air and maritime transport, which might contribute, in an effective manner, to the expansion of intra-Caribbean trade and investment, multi-destination tourism, as well as functional cooperation in general among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS. To this end, the following actions will be undertaken:

3.1 **Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean.** To implement Phase III of the Maps of Maritime Routes of the Greater Caribbean in order to display the maritime transport services which exist, their frequency, and where the different agents of the shipping lines can be found in the framework of the existing interactive map that is systematically updated, and which is made available on the ACS website.

3.2 Taking into consideration the importance of maritime maps for navigational security, the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the ACS and the International Hydrographic Organization is recommended in order to strengthen the hydrographic capacities of the Members States.

3.3 **The Port and Maritime Strategy of the Greater Caribbean.** To create a strategic plan for the maritime port development of the Greater Caribbean, which would allow the establishment of the order of priority of the actions to be developed, in order to have a competitive maritime sector and one that is capable of satisfying the foreign trade needs of the Greater Caribbean. This project will include strategic proposals to promote and develop port infrastructure that could effectively sustain the increase in traffic that is expected to result from the expansion of the Panama Canal in 2014. The Port and Maritime Strategy of the Greater

Caribbean will be executed jointly by the Centro-American Commission of Maritime Transport (COCATRAM), Cuban Ministry of Transport (MITRANS), Panama Maritime Authority (AMP), the Jamaica Ministry of Transport and Works (Port Authority of Jamaica) and the National Maritime Authority of Colombia.

3.4 **Air Transport Agreement among Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States.** To continue to promote the implementation and update of the Agreement in order to meet the need of a general aviation policy for the Greater Caribbean, establishing a legal and co-operation framework that would offer more air service options with the reduction of costs and prices, more routes, more carriers and improved services; as well as ensuring the highest levels of operating security and safety for international civil aviation.

3.5 **Commercial Co-operation Partnerships and Alliances among the Airlines of ACS Countries.** This project seeks to encourage the creation, development and promotion of policies to facilitate through code sharing agreements and operating agreements in order to increase the networks of routes and connections in the Greater Caribbean. To this end, each Member State or Associate Member, so desiring, may take part in the *Study on the possibilities of the demand for air transport among ACS member countries to analyse the commercial air policies of Member States*, which would include reviewing the statistics available on air traffic, as well as potential and future demand. The study must formulate policy recommendations that would translate into incentives for air transport in the region.

3.6 **Marine Pollution**. ACS should take the necessary measure for the prevention of marine pollution as recommended by The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Center Wider Caribbean (RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe) based in Curaçao.

4 DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Considering the vulnerability of our countries and territories to disasters associated with natural phenomena, ACS fosters international co-operation and capacity-building in the area of disaster risk reduction, in enhancing the provision of humanitarian assistance at all stages of a disaster and in promoting a culture of prevention and early warning systems. To this end, the following actions will be undertaken:

4.1 **Strengthening Hydro-meteorological Operations and Services in the Caribbean SIDS - Small Island Developing States.** Implement the Second Phase of this project, entitled *SHOCS II,* designed to enhance the role and strengthen the capacity of National Meteorological and Hydrological Institutions and Disaster Management Agencies in ACS Member States in the provision of early warning services and preparedness to mitigate impacts of natural hazards.

4.2 **Green Response to Disasters.** Develop standards and regulations that Caribbean governments and people can incorporate, to promote and facilitate the production and utilization of eco-efficient products, tools and processes to be utilized for responding to, and recovering from, disasters impacting on their country.

4.3 **Online Diploma on the Management of Disaster Risk Reduction.** This Diploma, developed by the Advanced School of Public Administration (ESAP) in Colombia and shared with the Member States of the ACS, will seek to give representatives of ACS Member States, greater knowledge on the issue in the region and on the implementation of mechanisms for exchanging experiences, strategies, tools and training.

4.4 **Broadcast of the Radio Soap Opera "The Rough Season".** The objective of this Soap Opera is to sensitize the Caribbean Population and improve their reactions to meteorological phenomena, while increasing their knowledge. To this end, it is expected to translate the radio soap opera into French and Spanish so that it could be broadcasted throughout the Greater Caribbean region.

4.5 **Plan to reduce vulnerability to disasters.** Contribute to the development of a plan to reduce vulnerability to disasters associated with natural phenomena, from the provisions of the Plan of Action of St. Marc, the Framework for Action of Hyogo and other instruments related to this subject that are recognized and implemented by the Member States of the ACS.

4.6 Take into consideration the management of risks in all development programs of the countries of the Greater Caribbean and favour the exchange of documentation of best practices in the field. In addition, enhance ACS member countries' capacity to recover from disasters from natural origin, and to strengthen their civil protection and prevention systems by taking advantage of the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) and by developing other similar insurance coverage facilities and mechanisms.

5 EDUCATION, CULTURE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The historic and cultural patrimony shared by the States and territories of our Association provide a solid basis on which to develop cooperation efforts, and to take concerted action in the areas of education, culture, science and technology.

5.1 **To foster Cooperation among the Universities and other tertiary institutions of the Greater Caribbean** in order to obtain the following results: A) to hold a bi-annual academic seminar on the priority areas of the ACS, with the objective of evaluating the progress made in these fields and to propose advancements which are precise and tangible; B) to promote joint research by the various university research groups which impact on the socio-economic and cultural development of the Greater Caribbean ; C) to promote student and teacher exchanges, by means of scholarships, internships and visiting professor programs; D) to promote international seminars dedicated to the study of our common historical and cultural patrimony; E) to promote joint publications, particularly those that contribute to strengthening co-operation in the Caribbean.

5.2 **Cultural Co-operation.** To foster technical meetings between the cultural cooperation units of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and those of the Ministries of Culture, with the objective of: a) strengthening cultural policies in the region; b) establishing precise and tangible programs in cultural exchange in the Greater Caribbean, such as book fairs, art festivals, art exhibitions and other cultural expressions, among which we highlight sport, given its ability to promote friendship between the people of the Caribbean and to build collective identities.

5.3 **Creation of a Calendar of Events.** To coordinate efforts to produce a Calendar of ACS Cultural Events annually, as a guide for public and private cultural institutions belonging to ACS Members, with a view to enhancing and increasing cultural integration and mutual knowledge, as well as the promotion of intra-regional tourism.

6 CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION

Cognizant of its commitment to preserve the Caribbean Sea as its common patrimony, the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was established under the auspices of the Association of Caribbean States, to function as the mechanism through which work to gain recognition for the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area within the context of sustainable development, could be carried out. In order to achieve these objectives, it is necessary to carry out the following actions:

6.1 **The examination of the legal, economic and financial implications, as well as benefits of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area** on a national regional and international scale; and to this end:

6.1.1. Recruit/Hire experts tasked with the examination of the legal, economic and financial implications of the Special Area concept;

6.1.2. Facilitate the work of the CSC by means of a greater access to the financial, human and technical resources of the region, and in particular, through collaboration with the University of the West Indies, and other research and development institutions in the Greater Caribbean;

6.1.3 Develop a mechanism for the reporting process of the CSC to the General Assembly of the United Nations; and to

6.1.4 Pursue enhanced participation by pertinent regional institutions in the work of the CSC with the previous approval of the Members States.

7 SPECIAL FUND

Considering the decision of the Ministerial Council of the ACS at its XVIII Meeting held in Panama City, Republic of Panama on 22 February 2013, instruct the Council of National Representatives of the Special Fund, to proceed as follows:

7.1 **Consolidate and strengthen the Unit** for the management and monitoring of cooperation projects with the aim of continuing the efforts made by the ACS in the strengthening of the Special Fund and the creation of an Executive Administration of Resources. In this regard, an international call for offer will be launched to hire a Project Manager who will be in charge of the Special Fund.

7.2 **To create a Forum for the Exchange of Ideas and Planning**, integrated by those responsible for cooperation of the Member States and Associate Members, as part of the new framework of the ACS towards international co-operation and development.

7.3 **To obtain Technical Assistance** aimed at the institutional strengthening of the Special Fund for managing co-operation projects.

7.4 **To prepare a Matrix that would systematize all potential Sources of Co-operation** for the ACS and the creation of a strategy so that, following a structured work plan and established priorities, the financing needed for the region might be sought.

8 The Executive Board of the Ministerial Council is charged with approving a matrix that establishes a Work Plan from the Plan of Action hereby presented, and will exercise control with regard to its execution.