

DRAFT REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

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

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(Virtual Meeting)

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2022 REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE CARIBBEAN SEA COMMISSION

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Introduction

The Caribbean Sea is internationally recognised as an area of unique biodiversity and an extremely fragile ecosystem that requires the implementation of regional initiatives aimed at promoting the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, including for consideration the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, without prejudice to international law. Accordingly, there is a need to promote the conservation of the Caribbean Sea through tools, such as international cooperation and policies that favour sustainable development, and for relevant regional and international development partners to work together to formulate and implement the region's initiatives.

Approximately 149 million people depend directly on the Caribbean Sea for economic prosperity and human well-being within the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. In addition, the Caribbean Sea is one of the most biologically diverse marine ecosystems in the world that is unfortunately affected by the lack of protection and recurrent threats associated with pollution, habitat loss, resource overexploitation, climate change, invasive species, massive influx of sargassum and, in general, the lack of sustainable management and planning.

Consequently, the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was established in 2006 under the auspices of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), through Agreement 6/06 of the Council of Ministers entitled "Establishment of the Caribbean Sea Initiative Follow-up Commission" with the objective of generating a structured mechanism to examine the work to obtain the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of

sustainable development and to promote cooperation and coordination actions among Member States in order to overcome regional challenges affecting the Caribbean Sea.

This effort was recognised by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) through resolution A/RES/61/197 entitled "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations", which welcomed its establishment and work to develop the concept of designating the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, and invited the international community to support these efforts.

In the context of increasing adverse impacts of climate change, public health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, biodiversity loss, continued ecosystem degradation and pollution, preservation of the Caribbean Sea is imperative to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations. Therefore, the CSC Steering Committee has identified six priority issues to work on within the framework of the ACS Action Plan 2022-2028: sargassum, pollution, regulation of microplastics, ocean governance, disaster risk reduction and climate change impacts (sea level rise and forced migration).

The latest effective resolution A/RES/75/214 recognised the efforts of the ACS to promote sustainable resource use and conservation practices, and calls on the international community to work with the ACS in this mandate, through the provision of financial resources, capacity building and technical support. The international community is invited to support the efforts of the CSC to establish a data bank with the objective of improving the management of specific critical emerging issues related to the sustainability of the Caribbean Sea through the sharing of management experiences and resource data from projects including, inter alia, the prediction, monitoring and management of sargassum inundation facing the Caribbean. The Secretary General is invited to submit a progress report on the designation of the Special Area.

While the CSC was revitalised in 2015, the vision of seeking Special Area status emerged two decades ago with the Caribbean Sea Initiative. In 2019, the CMC joined the Disaster Risk Reduction, Environment and Caribbean Sea (DECS) Directorate of the Association of Caribbean States. The CSC has held twenty-two (22) meetings with the purpose of ensuring multidisciplinary, strategic planning and technical follow-up with respect to the Designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. This report is a summary of activities from May to December 2022, and seeks to inform the Membership of actions taken, and to be taken to advance the achievement of its objectives.

(I) Staff Changes in the Directorate

The Directorate underwent staff changes in April, August and September 2022. On 25 April, Ms. Cherisse Braithwaite-Joseph assumed the position of Adviser to the Directorate. Ms. Sharane Mohammed resigned as Administrative Assistant and left the position on 25 August 2022. This role was temporarily filled by Ms. Gina Cabrera-Tilokee for the period 1-30, September. This vacancy has been advertised and recruitment is ongoing. In August, the Directorate welcomed two interns from the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Segregated Portfolio Company (CCRIF SPC). Justyn Alexander started his internship on 2, August and Jamala Alexander on 18, August. Both are assigned to the areas of Catastrophe Risk Reduction and the Caribbean Sea Commission. Justyn Alexander completed his internship at CCRIF SPC on 7, October and Jamala Alexander completed her internship at CCRIF SPC on 26, October 2022. Both will continue to work as ACS interns until 16, December.

(II) Meetings of the Caribbean Sea Commission

(a) Meeting of the Executive Board of the Caribbean Sea Commission

This meeting was held on 20, July 2022 and was chaired by Dr Rahanna Juman, Director (ag.) of the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) of Trinidad and Tobago in her capacity as Chair of the Caribbean Sea Commission. In attendance were: Ms. Rosa Otero, Director of International Relations of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic in her capacity as Vice Chair, the ACS Secretariat as Rapporteur of the CSC, the Ministry of Relations of the Dominican Republic and the staff of the Directorate of Disaster Risk Reduction, Environment and Caribbean Sea (DECS), headed by Director Ana Leticia Ramirez Cuevas. The objective of the meeting was to establish the responsibilities and functions of the CSC Executive Board as well as to finalise the schedule of meetings and actions to be taken to continue the Commission's projects and initiatives.

(b) XXII Meeting of the Caribbean Sea Commission

The 22nd Meeting of the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) was held virtually on 2, September 2022. The purpose of this meeting was to review relevant plans, agreements and reports relating to the work of the Caribbean Sea Commission. The meeting discussed the agreements of the VII Coordination Mechanism, the 2022 -2028 Action Plan, the Implementation Plan and the DECS work programme 2022-2023. The DECS Director also presented a report on the work programme of the CSC for the period 2021 to 2022. The Director provided the Membership with an

overview of the projects to be implemented in the subsequent work period and Members agreed to submit comments to the Secretariat by formal correspondence. The executive summary and rapporteur's report were completed.

Projects of the Caribbean Sea Commission

(a) Designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development.

The Directorate prepared and submitted the Secretary General's Report to the UNGA on 31, May 2022 on progress on the concept of the Designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development.

TORs to update the 2014 consultancy study undertaken to analyse the legal implications of the Designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, including sustainable tourism, trade and poverty were submitted for review by the Membership. Comments provided by Colombia were received and are being incorporated.

(b) Sandy Shorelines

The Project "Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Caribbean Sandy Shorelines Alternatives for Control and Resilience" seeks to improve the coastal resilience of ACS Member States by bringing together coastal erosion experts in the region through the establishment of a network of coastal erosion monitoring stations. This will enable ACS Member States to better understand the impacts of climate change on the region's coasts and to channel international financial resources to address the effects of the region's high vulnerability to sea level rise caused by climate change.

Sandy Shorelines Project: Updates by Component: Component 1: Focal Point Network – The VII Focal Point Meeting was held on 7 July 2022. The meeting agreed to send the update on the progress of the monitors' network for review by the Technical Coordinator. In addition, the Focal Points agreed to hold individual meetings to discuss the network.

Component 1.4: The Project Manager consulted with the project's Technical Coordinator, Dr José Luis Juanes, and held formal meetings in May 2022 at the ACS Secretariat General in Port of Spain. The project team determined that a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is required for component 5 and 6, namely the Beach Rehabilitation Manual and the Sandy Shorelines Conference in June 2023.

The group of Technical Experts to develop the Manual are as follows:

- Dr. Jose Luis Juanes Martí - Technical Coordinator of the Sandy Shorelines Project
- Dr. Constanza Ricaurte Villota - INVEMAR
- Mr. Ywenn De La Torre - BGRM Guadeloupe
- Dr. Miguel Canals - University of Puerto Rico

Component 2: Building Institutional and Human Resource Capacity to Address Erosion Processes and Climate Change

Component 2.1: Conferences/Trainings - Dr. José Luis Juanes, Technical Coordinator of the Sandy Shorelines Project, has submitted an Abstract "Erosion Process on the Caribbean Sandy Beaches" for participation in the International Conference on Coastal Engineering ICCE Conference 2022 to be held in Sydney Australia on 4-9 December 2022. ACS received acceptance of the abstract by the organisers and will be formally participating in the event and KIOST will support the participation of four Focal

Points. Considering the advances in their respective monitoring networks, ACS nominated the participation of Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Panamá and Jamaica.

The consultancy GAMMA, SA in the implementation of the Executive Projects in both Trinidad & Tobago and Antigua & Barbuda delivered training courses entitled "Post Graduate Course in Coastal Processes and Beach Methodologies for Beach Restoration". These were held at the Institute of Marine Affairs, Chaguaramas Auditorium, Trinidad, from 25 April 2022 to 6 May 2022 with 13 participants/experts from across Trinidad, including the University of Trinidad and Tobago, the Environmental Management Authority, the Coastal Protection Agency and the Institute of Marine Affairs, among others, and subsequently from 11 May 2022 to 17 May 2022 at Dunbar's Lab Complex, St John's Antigua & Barbuda with 9 participants from the Fisheries Division, Department of Environment and Department of Metrological Services

Component 3: Coastal Equipment Procurement Strategy -The Project Manager and the Technical Coordinator held individual meetings with the (9) Project Focal Points from 18 to 29 August 2022 to request the documents concerning the custody transfer agreement and the supply of the equipment to the Member States, essential documents in order to finalise the delivery of the equipment.

Antigua and Barbuda-This meeting was held on Friday 19, August 2022, to discuss the second component of the project, the status of the letter of agreement for the team and the report. The report was to be submitted by the end of August, but the submission of the letter of agreement was not confirmed.

Costa Rica - This meeting was held on Monday 22, August 2022. The report was presented at the end of August. The letter of agreement for the team was pending, but there was no confirmation at the presentation.

Cuba - The letter of agreement for the team is pending.

Dominican Republic - This meeting was held on Tuesday 23, August 2022. The letter of agreement for the team was to be presented. Mr. Santana requested the Project Manager and the Technical Coordinator send the report template, which will include the surveys of 5 beaches.

Guatemala - This meeting was held on Thursday 25 August 2022. Mr. Edwin Garcia mentioned that they had a new administration in Guatemala and made a request to the Project Manager and the Technical Coordinator to send the model report, the letter of agreement for the team and if possible all the information regarding the project.

Haiti - This meeting was scheduled for Thursday 25, August 2022, but due to a technical problem in Haiti, it had to be cancelled. Mr. Jack will contact Ms. Ninon by email to request the report and letter of agreement for the team.

Jamaica - This meeting was held on Friday 19, August 2022, the ACS is awaiting the letter of agreement for the team and its report.

Panama - This meeting was held on Wednesday 24, August 2022. Ms Pinto believes that the letter of agreement for the team will be ready by the end of September 2022, and her report will be submitted by the end of August 2022. In this discussion, Panama made a reference about the value of Sandy Shorelines II and will support the continuation of the project.

Trinidad and Tobago - This meeting was held on Thursday 18, August 2022 in connection with the letter of agreement for the team. They have already delivered the report and Dr Juanes is using it as an example for the other countries.

The Sandy Shorelines Technical Coordinator has submitted a template for each Member State to start compiling their National Monitoring Network reports and will send it.

Project Manager Mr. Jack and Research Assistant, Luisa Capri Sanchez met on 13, September 2022 with the supplier ACRE in order to update and finalise the quotation for drones required to complete the contracting strategy for Sandy Shorelines.

Component 4: Beach Rehabilitation

Component 4.1: Executive Projects –

Rehabilitation studies were completed in Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua and Barbuda.

During this period, ACS's consultant CITMA/GAMMA (a Cuban company responsible for conducting extensive coastal studies/works in the region) successfully completed Beach Rehabilitation Studies at Runaway Beach, St John's Antigua & Barbuda, and Bonasse Beach, Cedros Trinidad & Tobago. This completes all fieldwork exercises and post-graduate courses at all three sites for the Executive Beach Projects with the previous project completed at Viento Playa Frio in Panama in October 2021.

Component 4.2: Video Monitoring Tower in Jamaica – (This component is managed by KIOST and NEPA). The ACS is in consultation with NEPA Jamaica, to organise capacity building exercises as part of its Beach Monitoring Tower Project in Hellshire, Jamaica.

Representatives from the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST) arrived in Jamaica on July 11, 2022 to commission and train nominated NEPA representatives in the use of the Tower's Video Monitoring System (VMS).

A six-month trial period of the equipment is expected until the end of the year after which the Sandy Shoreline teams will be exposed to the use of video monitoring systems to assess coastal processes on beaches and their benefits.

Component 5: Development of a Beach Rehabilitation Manual with Scientific and Engineering Criteria that respond to the particularities of the Caribbean Coastal Regions.

Component 5.1: Beach Rehabilitation Manual - The development of the Beach Rehabilitation Manual forms part of consultations held between the Project Manager and the project's Technical Coordinator Dr José Luis Juanes during formal meetings in May 2022 at the ACS Secretariat in Port of Spain.

The Beach Rehabilitation Manual is envisioned by Dr Juanes, as a Caribbean best practice manual that addresses the unique characteristics in relation to coastal processes, sediment movement and the management of hazards and risks associated with Caribbean Beaches to rival the US Army Corps Coastal Protection Manual.

The results of the Beach Rehabilitation Studies in Panama, Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad and Tobago provide the region with the opportunity to show site-specific variations in formulas established with the extensive data collected from the sites, which will then allow for mathematical modelling and the development of unique strategies for the rehabilitation of their beaches.

Component 5.4: Online Platform

With the connectivity issues presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to disseminate information about the work and results of the project, the Sandy Shorelines project team drafted a terms of reference document and initiated a series of consultations with IT companies for the development of the platform.

During this period, the Sandy Shorelines team completed the terms of reference for the establishment of the platform and sought bids to select the company. Through this process a company was selected to build the platform.

Meeting about the online platform - This meeting was held on 9, September 2022, with the objective of discussing the TOR for the online platform with three potential bidders.

Component 6: Regional Conference on Beach Preservation - The ACS continues to work towards the completion of the Sandy Coasts project, which is expected to end in June 2023 with the organisation of a conference that not only highlights the work of the project, but also provides a platform for other experts/scientists currently engaged in similar research/projects on the effect of climate change and land degradation on the beaches and coasts of the Caribbean and Latin America to present their work and allow discussions on the topic, best practices and areas where further research may be needed. This conference is called the Wider Caribbean Region Beach Preservation Conference 2023.

The ACS has chosen the following countries as possible venues for the conference: Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago. Criteria for choosing a conference venue would include cost-benefit analyses of conference/auditorium space in member states and the availability, accessibility and logistics within the country. The ACS is currently in contact with the Focal Points within the chosen member states and will make a final determination in November 2022.

The Project Director and the Sandy Shoreline Project Technical Coordinator completed a Draft Concept Note for the Beach Preservation Conference, which will evolve from the theme, agenda, experts, presenters and all aspects of the conference.

(a) Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative (GCCMI)

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) established an unprecedented partnership to address the challenges of climate-forced mobility in the Wider Caribbean region.

Forced migration and displacement due to the adverse effects of sudden or slow onset climate impacts are likely to negatively affect livelihoods in many parts of the region, affecting local and national development pathways.

The Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative (GCCMI) will produce a comprehensive report on the extent, nature, implications and response to climate displacement and migration, in all relevant areas, in the Wider Caribbean. The report will be based on state-of-the-art modelling projecting climate mobility for the coming decades and field research in current hotspots of climate mobility to take stock of the local drivers of climate mobility. The resulting GCCMI Action Programme will promote a regional vision and roadmap for people-centred, locally anchored and evidence-based efforts to address climate mobility by strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of affected communities in hotspots.

High Level launch of the Greater Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative.

This event was held in New York City on 22, September 2022 to launch the Wider Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative in collaboration with the Global Climate Mobility Centre (UNOPS). It provided a constructive high-level forum for the exchange of views on challenges and opportunities.

Pre-launch meetings:

Meeting with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) This meeting was held on 9, May 2022. The objective was to present the GCCMI to UNDP staff and invite them to join the initiative. The ACS sent all relevant documents to UNDP and held further internal meetings and consultations.

Meeting with the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative (ACMI) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – This meeting was held on 10, May 2022. The aim of the meeting was to introduce GCCMI to the UAE and invite them to join the initiative.

Meeting with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and ACMI This meeting was held on 16, June 2022. The objective was to introduce the GCCMI to the UNDRR and discuss future partnership and expectations.

The ACMI Stakeholder Forum – This forum was held from 26, July to 28, July 2022. Directorate staff attended relevant parts of the programme, such as the Women's Forum and the Youth Forum. The Forum brought together partners, stakeholders and experts and representatives of local and regional institutions, international organisations and key African groups that form the ACMI Community of Practice.

ACS DECS, Communication Unit meeting with Sharon Johnson; Kamal Amakrane, Miguel Verzbolovskis; David Lonnberg; Hyun Kim - This meeting was held on 8, September, 2022 to determine the logistics for the Launch Event of the Wider Caribbean Climate Mobility Initiative. Agreements were made on roles and responsibilities and next steps were finalised.

Virtual Courses

CSC Seminar: "Microplastics in the Caribbean: Sources, Impacts and Monitoring Methodologies - The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in collaboration with the Institute of Marine Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago (IMA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP CEP) through the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention, the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), the Centre for Research and Advanced Studies of the National Polytechnic Institute (CINVESTAV), and the Basel Convention Regional Training and Technology Transfer Centre for the Caribbean (BCRC-Caribbean), the Centre for Research and Advanced Studies of the National Polytechnic Institute (CINVESTAV), and the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Caribbean (BCRC-Caribbean) are jointly organising the Caribbean Sea Commission (CSC) seminar entitled: "Microplastics in the Caribbean: Sources, Impacts and Monitoring Methodologies". This seminar, was held virtually from Monday 31 October to Friday 4 November 2022, was facilitated by a total of 22 regional and international speakers/experts.

The CSC Seminar lasted 4 hours per day with 15 minutes of refreshments, for a total of 20 contact hours. The target audiences were decision and policy makers; scientists/academics; environment ministries/regulators, waste management authorities, private sector stakeholders: manufacturing sector/key industry stakeholders; NGOs and CSOs with an interest in microplastic pollution reduction and interested students. The seminar was delivered in three languages simultaneously (English, French and Spanish). To ensure the organisation of the Seminar, DECS organised a total of 9 meetings with the different organisers, individually and in groups, to ensure efficient coordination and logistical planning. These meetings took place between May and October 2022.

Commemoration of International Days

The commemoration of international days serves to make information on issues of concern available to the general public, generate motivation and incentivise political will and resources to address issues of general international concern such as human rights, health, nature conservation, sustainable development, education, and global issues such as climate change. Based on the above, DECS organised and prepared outreach articles concerning the Environment and the Caribbean Sea, as well as participate in a volunteer beach clean-up activity in the framework of International Coastal Clean-up Day. The days celebrated and activities carried out are described below.

International Mother Earth Day – 22nd April

This day was commemorated on 22, April 2022. DECS prepared an article for the AEC website and social media platforms to raise awareness on environmental issues such as climate change and environmental degradation.

World Environment Day – 5th June

This day was commemorated on 5, June 2022. DECS prepared an article for the ACS website and social media platforms to raise awareness on environmental issues such as climate change and environmental degradation.

World Beaches Day – 1st September

This day was commemorated on 1, September 2022. DECS prepared an article for the ACS website and social media platforms to raise awareness of the ecological issues that are negatively affecting our global beaches.

International Coastal Clean-up Day – 17th September

This day was commemorated on 17, September 2022. ACS staff joined the International Coastal Clean-up Day organised by ICC Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Institute of Marine Affairs, the Environmental Management Authority and the Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Caribbean. In addition, DECS prepared an article for the ACS website and social media platforms to raise awareness about marine litter.

Closing

As Chair of the Caribbean Sea Commission, Trinidad and Tobago reiterates the importance of continuing to strengthen the priority initiatives and activities identified at the 22nd Meeting of the CSC held on 2 September 2022.

Particular attention must be given to the mandate received from the UN through the resolution, "Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations", through the preparation of a next report to the United Nations General Assembly. During the period covered by this report, this issue has received priority on the ACS agenda, the members of the Association and the General Secretariat must join forces to continue to strengthen and mobilise resources for approved projects as well as new initiatives that promote the development of the Caribbean Sea, its preservation and sustainability.

Trinidad and Tobago has every confidence that the joint, supportive and active efforts of Members are required actions to ensure that the Commission's strategic objectives are met.

Thank you.