

DRAFT REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

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

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

(Virtual Meeting)

18th January, 2023

GUATEMALA'S REPORT IN ITS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

At the 27th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), held virtually on April 29th, 2022, Guatemala was elected by acclamation to Chair the Ministerial Council for the period 2022-2023. Since assuming said Chairmanship, Guatemala's approach has been channelled toward spearheading, together with the members of the ACS, the strengthening of the Greater Caribbean and broadening actions which would further contribute to meeting the priority challenges of the region in a holistic and sustainable manner, upon recovery from the Pandemic engendered by COVID-19.

Guatemala assumed the Chair in a very active and integration-oriented manner in order to strengthen the institutional framework of the ACS and transform it into a more efficient organization, prepared to respond to the new realities and opportunities facing the region following the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This would include promoting cooperation and the economic reactivation of its membership, as well as resilience in the face of the climatic crisis which have had a major impact on various sectors of all the countries of the region.

The Work Plan of the Guatemala Chairmanship of the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) 2022-2023 was based on 4 strategic pillars of action:

- Increase multidimensional cooperation
- Strengthen a blue and green regional agenda
- Reactivate the economy, by means of attracting investment and development
- Address the migration cycle from a development perspective.

As well as: the implementation of the ACS Plan of Action 2022-2023 and, in conjunction with the Chairs of the Special Committees, developing activities emanating from the 4 action pillars such as strengthening cultural ties, expanding cooperation for investment programs and human mobility, widening connectivity, especially maritime, air and land transport; Fostering the blue and green agenda at the regional level, as well as sustainable tourism and institutional strengthening facilitated by consensus with the membership.

With the support of Members and the Secretariat, under the leadership of Secretary General Rodolfo Sabonge, the Chair promoted the 9th ACS Summit, to be held in May 2023 in accordance with the tenets of Agreement 6/19, resuming the face-to-face activities of the Association prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The cooperation, collaboration and support of the Membership, were key to Guatemala's chairing of twenty-one meetings of the Association:

- With the objective of securing strategic alliances, a Working Visit was organized for the Secretary General, and he met with representatives from CABEL, UNDP, SIECA, CEPREDENAC, among others. This was done in May, 2022.
- On June 1st, 2022, the 59th Meeting of the Executive Board of the ACS Ministerial Council was held, where the calendar of meetings and the holding of the VI Cooperation Conference and Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean were approved.
- In June 2022, Guatemala made a statement on behalf of the ACS at the Plenary Debate of the International Conference “Stockholm +50: *A healthy planet for the prosperity of all - our responsibility, our opportunity*”.
- On June 17, 2022, the I Meeting of the Executive Board of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration, as well as the 42nd Meeting of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration were held. The said meetings examined the budget, the membership’s contributions and the operationalization of the Working Group to examine the findings of the audit.
- 5 Meetings of the Working Group.
- On August 2nd, the 7th Meeting of the Coordination Mechanism was held, where the Special Committees reported on their progress in the context of the ACS Plan of Action 2022-2028, whereby all members’ remarkable commitment and enthusiasm were in evidence.
- On September 7th, the 60th Open Meeting of the Executive Board of the Ministerial Council was held, where the process for electing the Director for Cooperation and Mobilization of Resources was addressed, as a result of which the Secretariat presented its report to the 11th Extraordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council.
- On September 19th, the Joint Breakfast among Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CELAC and the ACS, was held in the city of New York, in the margins of the 77th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Representatives exchanged views on various issues of interest common to the regions. Specifically, they discussed the future of regional integration and the importance of establishing strategic alliances.
- On September 21st, in New York City, also in the margins of the 77th UNGA, Guatemala chaired the 11th Extraordinary Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council, where unanimous decisions were taken on behalf of all the membership and the achievements anticipated during the Guatemala’s term in office as Chair of the Ministerial Council were presented.

- On September 21st, in New York City, again on the margins of the 77th UNGA, Guatemala chaired the Inter-Secretariat Meeting of the ACS attended by the Founding Organizations of the Association, attended by the ACS and SICA. This space for dialogue was leveraged to address topics related to cooperation and coordination, particularly with regard to growing the Caribbean region and to determining specific actions and projects which could be presented to the 9th ACS Summit of Heads of State and/or Government.
- On September 22nd, in New York City, once more in the margins of the 77th UNGA, the Event to Launch the ACS Initiative on Climate Mobility took place. At this time, there was an exchange of the points of view regarding the challenges and opportunities in respect of climate mobility.
- On November 10-11, the VI International Conference on Cooperation was held in Havana, Cuba. This conference was attended by members, cooperation agencies and invited guests. It is anticipated that the VII International Conference on Cooperation of the ACS will take place within the framework of meetings of the 9th ACS Summit of Heads of State and/or Government, in Antigua Guatemala City in May of 2023.
- Four (4) meetings of the Drafting Committee in preparation for the 9th ACS Summit of Heads of State and/or Government.
 - On August 17-18, a Meeting of the Drafting Committee was held to address the Draft Declaration of Guatemala, gaining consensus on the majority of the paragraphs, thus hoping to be concluded towards the end of 2022.
 - On October 25th, the Meeting of the Drafting Committee was chaired, which analysed the open paragraphs, and it is anticipated that these will be closed and approved once the relevant consultations by member countries have taken place and they are concluded by another meeting to close the Declaration.
 - On December 1st, a Meeting of the Drafting Committee was chaired to analyse the open paragraphs, which were subsequently successfully finalized, leading to a closed Declaration ahead of the 9th Summit, to be held on May 12th, 2023.

The following meetings will be held in January 2023:

- The 16th Extraordinary Meeting of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration
- The 43rd Meeting of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration
- The 8th Meeting of the Coordination Mechanism

- The 25th Intersessional Meeting Preparatory for the 28th Ordinary Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council
- The 12th Extraordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council

It is also worth noting that the positioning of the Association was achieved in the framework of meetings of CELAC, CARICOM, SELA, SICA, UNDP, ECLAC, CTO, European Union, Ibero-american Secretariat (SEGIB-spanish acronym), COP27 and other multilateral and cooperation fora.

In this regard, this 25th Intersessional Meeting provides the last chance to fine-tune the political and technical documents to be considered by the Preparatory Meeting to the 28th Ordinary Meeting of the ACS Ministerial Council, as well as the Draft Declaration of Antigua Guatemala and Plan of Action 2022-2025 to be signed by the ACS Heads of State and/or Government. The Intersessional also presents an opportunity to reach an agreement in respect of administrative and management matters which will have an impact of the efficiency of the ACS Secretariat to carry out its functions. Guatemala is confident that there will be an in-depth debate on these matters.

The title proposed by the Chair for the 9th ACS Summit is ***“Innovating integration through the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean”***. Promoting economic and social development through international cooperation and achieving post pandemic reactivation of countries to attract investments and encourage their development based on a blue and green agenda aimed at counteracting climate change, establishing channels of communication which are open and transparent, with the objective of working together so that this important organization can be more active, and possess a strategic vision which favours its Member States and peoples; these are indispensable conditions for the Greater Caribbean to overcome the challenges which face each and every one of its constituent nations and territories.

Guatemala looks forward to receiving delegations from all ACS countries, in its territory to participate in the 15th Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean, the 7th ACS Conference on Cooperation, the 44th Meeting of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration, the 28th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the ACS and its preparatory meeting, as well as the 9th Summit of Heads of State and/or Government of the ACS. The Draft Agenda for the Intersessional Meeting includes an update on the preparations for these meetings.

In conclusion, the Government of Guatemala extends its thanks to ACS Members for their unfailing support received during its chairmanship at this important milestone in the process of change in this region which has been marked by all the events which took place this year; a special vote of thanks to Secretary General Rodolfo Sabonge for his continuous and wise accompaniment to this Chair which was instrumental in making possible the progress achieved towards the strengthening of the Association.