

ACS BOOSTS REGIONAL AIR AND MARITIME TRANSPORT



Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (October 1st 2014) - The Association of Caribbean States' (ACS) continued efforts to promote Sustainable Development in the Greater Caribbean was reinforced during the 23rd Meeting of the Special Committee on Transport held at the ACS Headquarters in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago on October 1st, 2014.

Dr. Morais Guy, Minister without Portfolio (Housing), Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing of Jamaica delivered introductory remarks at the meeting and stressed that the Greater Caribbean must band together in the area of regional air and maritime transport so as to facilitate opportunities for the enhancement of growth in the region. He stressed that “together, we can effectively compete and grow the economies of the region.”

H.E. Alfonso Múnera, Secretary General of the ACS, in his address during the opening ceremony, also expressed his belief in the growth of the economies of the region with improved air and maritime transport. He brought to the forefront the progress of the current ACS project: Maps of Maritime Routes, of which the ACS has formed an importance alliance with the Central American Commission on Transport (COCATRAM), the Ministry of Transport of Cuba and the Panama Maritime Authority to see its successful completion. This initiative by the ACS through the Directorate of Transport seeks to increase intraregional maritime trade and foster external links by creating an updated map of maritime routes in the Greater Caribbean, to allow exporters, importers, vendors or buyers, both internationally and regionally to know when, how, through which operators and under what conditions they may transport their goods.

On the hand, with regards to air transport, H.E. Múnera noted that though the progress has been slow, COPA Airlines has made a great effort in connecting the region of the Greater Caribbean. Additionally, with the vision of producing another form of direct connectivity via air transport, the ACS has made it a priority to enter into discussions with other airlines. However, given its business status, he acknowledged that negotiations would go slowly.

Director George Nicholson, in describing the progress in the study on Port and Maritime Strategies, gave a synopsis of the state of the maritime industry in the region. He indicated that out of this diagnostic exercise, the ACS would now be establishing relationships with organisations such as the Port Management Association of the Caribbean (PMAC) and the Meso American & Caribbean Hydrographic Commission (MACHC), seeking to undertake risk assessment of the Caribbean Sea as well as develop training programmes for regional maritime capacity building.

Director Nicholson reiterated the ACS' commitment to working with international partners and Member States to advance the transport agenda in the region.