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MEDIA RELEASE

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Twenty Observers and donors to the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) have met as a first step to form a technical working group on cooperation which seeks to facilitate cooperation projects for the benefit of the Greater Caribbean. This initiative has special relevance particularly as the region seeks to ensure continued development emerging from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ambassadors and representatives five geographic regions around the world, discussed collaboration possibilities, the creation of the group and the framework under which it should operate during the 1st Meeting of the Technical Working Group of ACS Observers and Donors, hosted by the ACS Secretariat.

ACS Secretary General Rodolfo Sabonge noted that while the concept and practice of cooperation are questioned, but meaningful and impactful cooperation are necessary for the recovery of the Greater Caribbean. "At this juncture, cooperation is especially important because the COVID 19 pandemic has dramatically affected all the countries of the region, especially those that already showed more signs of vulnerability. It is time to move forward in solidarity and to make a call to the entire community of countries, so that we can reduce the impact caused by COVID and get back on the path towards sustainable development in the region as soon as possible".

Ingrid Jacobs, Director of Cooperation and Resource Mobilisation, which seeks to attract interest in collaboration with the ACS, thought that the meeting was a step in the right direction. "We are very grateful for the positive response shown by ACS Observer countries, organisations and donors to explore different avenues for collaboration and promote coordinated efforts and a united front, with a genuine hope that we, united can succeed in these trying times and recover from the pandemics.

We cannot do it alone and we have a long path to a full recovery, forging partnerships for the benefit our people and our region is vital”.

Ambassadors from Brazil, Chile and Peru to the ACS welcomed the initiative. Ambassador of Chile, Juan Aníbal Barría García said, “Chile values this effort to pool resources to address the particular needs, challenges and concerns of Caribbean States and renews its commitment to collaborate with the Caribbean. Chile will present its proposals and assistance projects within this group...”

Representatives from Italia, Spain, Korea, IILA (Italo-Latin American organisation), the Turkish cooperation agency and the Mexican International agency for Cooperation presented some of their projects and priorities in the region and expressed their support for the creation of the group.

Resident Representative for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Randi Davis said, “I was delighted to see the ACS convene such a cross section of partners with a single goal of galvanizing more support for the nations of the Caribbean, sharing best practices and lessons learned. UNDP is happy to share its knowledge and experience on the diversity of issues we share in common such as renewable energy and the green economy, disaster risk reduction, gender equality and the socioeconomic impacts and recovery from COVID.”

This year, the ACS will coordinate its fifth International Cooperation Conference in May, which seeks to bring potential donors and collaborators to the Caribbean table to discuss areas of joint work.

The Association of Caribbean States has 28 Observer countries, six Founding Observers, and 14 Social Actors. ACS Observers typically contribute to projects through financing projects or lending technical assistance, human resources and training. Projects and programmes implemented by the ACS can impact 35 countries and territories, and over 280 million people around the Greater Caribbean.

About the ACS

Established in 1994, the Association of Caribbean States is an organisation for consultation, cooperation and concerted action in the Greater Caribbean. The organisation’s work is focused on: cooperation in the areas of: disaster risk reduction; sustainable tourism; trade, transport & external economic relations; and the protection of the Caribbean Sea. The ACS has 25 Member States, 10 Associate Members 6 Founding Observers and 28 Observer Countries.