

ACS, CARICOM & Other Founding Observers Meet to Coordinate Efforts



Regional cooperation and integration organisations met in Port-of-Spain at the ACS (Association of Caribbean States) Secretariat on Friday, to find ways to coordinate their work, reduce duplication of efforts and impact the people of the Greater Caribbean with greater efficiency. ACS Secretary General Dr. June Soomer, CARICOM Secretary General Irwin LaRocque and UNECLAC's Sub-Regional Director for the Caribbean Diane Quarless sat at the table, while joined online by the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Central American Economic Integration Process (SIECA). The leaders discussed how they can better coordinate work in the pursuit of the sustainable development of the Greater Caribbean.

It is the seventh Inter-Secretariat meeting of the Founding Observers of the ACS. The ACS is the organisation conceptualised to widen cooperation between the English Caribbean and all the other territories touched by the Caribbean Sea. SG Soomer says "We have been asked to deliver on joint work programmes that deliver optimum results. We have a mandate to promote a robust environmental, economic, social, environmental programme tailored to the vulnerabilities of our region. The ACS has a broad mandate of cooperation, coordination and concerted action. We must bring new optimism and hope to the region, so that our names are synonymous with promise."

CARICOM SG LaRocque is happy that the inter-secretariat meetings have been revived. "I see our priorities as very inter-related. We collectively have not lived up to our own expectations of coming together to try to forge closer relationships. When this organisation (ACS) was formed, it was intended to be the secretariat of secretariats, meaning the ACS has a coordinating role to play among us in a manner that avoids duplication and creates value for all."

Jorge Vargas of the Central American Integration System SICA says, "We are very happy to be able to participate here and share ideas. There are important synergies between the work plans of SICA

and ACS. We need more dynamism with CARICOM and ACS Member States to join our efforts, goals and plans.”

UNECLAC’s Sub-Regional Director, Diane Quarless added, “I am extremely pleased to be here and participate. I fully support the approach and I want to use this opportunity to reaffirm the support and partnership between ECLAC and the ACS, there are many opportunities for collaboration that we would like to pursue.”

Chair of the ACS Ministerial Council 2020, Barbados Foreign Minister Dr. Jerome X. Walcott is pleased that the organisations have joint efforts to their common goals. He says, “This presents an opportunity for all to ventilate views, as at the end of the day, we are expected to deliver results in the areas agreed to.”

The ACS has six Founding Observers: Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Central American Economic Integration Process (SIECA), United Nations Economic Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), the Latin American Economic System (SELA), and the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO). The annual ACS Cooperation and Ministerial meetings are set to take place in March, chaired by the incumbent Chair, Barbados. The Association of Caribbean States is an organisation for consultation, cooperation and concerted action. The Organisation’s work is focused on: Disaster Risk Reduction, Transport, Sustainable Tourism, Trade & External Economic Relations and protection of the Caribbean Sea. The ACS has 25 Member States, 10 Associate Members and serves over 250 million people in the Greater Caribbean.