

Release - 30th Meeting of the Special Committee on Transport



ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES (ACS)

DIRECTORATE FOR TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (DTSD)

PRESS RELEASE

The Association of Caribbean States hosted its 30th Meeting of the Special Committee on Transport on Monday 26th July, 2021, via videoconference. Participation included fourteen (14) ACS Member States, one (1) ACS Founding Observer and five (5) ACS Observer Countries and five (5) Special Invited Guests. This meeting took the form of two (2) sessions with the aim of informing participants of the on-going status and trajectory for transport recovery post-COVID-19, as well as updating the meeting on the proposed ACS' strategic priorities that will be accomplished in the next few years by the ACS.

The first of the two part meeting was a Sectoral Meeting for Transport Partners and Stakeholders and included presentations from international transport experts who discussed key challenges facing the transport sector and the way forward as we recover from the on-going health pandemic, as well as rebuilding in a more resilient and sustainable manner. Mr. Rodolfo Sabonge, Secretary of the ACS

gave an overview and context for the meeting. He highlighted the overall strategic direction of the ACS related to Transport as expounded within the proposed ACS Plan of Action 2022-2024. In situating the discussions, he highlighted the changes to the transport sector which included modalities of life in the field of education and supply chain disruptions. He posited that the recovery of the sector must be underpinned by digital transformation and regional cooperation.

Among the presenters Mr. Ricardo J. Sanchez, Senior Economic Affairs Officer of the Division of International Trade, represented the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). He highlighted the work that both organisations is undertaking in the focal area and provided insights on regional port activity performance in Latin American and Caribbean Region in terms of bulk cargo and containerized shipping while underscoring the need for digitalized processes to increase regional competitiveness and global market access. The President of the Port Management Association of the Caribbean (PMAC) Mr. Darwin Telemaque presented on “A Strategy approach for Port Management and Efficiency to Build Resilience of the Transport Sector in the Region” and discussed the importance of digital transformation of Caribbean ports to meet the demands of the industry. The Meeting also benefited from the presentation of Mr. Juan Carlos Croston, President of the Caribbean Shipping Association (CSA) on “Facing the New Realities in Shipping - The importance of harmonization for resilience in the shipping industry”. He discussed the Just-in-time versus the Just-in-case scenario noting that there is significant pressure to achieve more supply chain efficiency which means depending on infrastructure and people. The session culminated with a roundtable discussion with Mr. Pascal Ollivier, President of Maritime Street. He reiterated the importance of digitalization, emphasizing its benefit to greater operational efficiency that would optimize existing physical infrastructure. He also noted that digitalisation should precede physical infrastructural focus, highlighting that human capital must be at the heart of digitalization.

The second part of the meeting occurred as a closed session focused on transport matters related to the ACS’ 30th Meeting of the Special Committee on Transport which discussed the work to be accomplished in this focal area. The meeting endorsed the proposed strategic priorities related to transport for the next three years, keeping in line with the impending ACS’ Plan of Action 2022-2024. The ACS proposes to focus its work for transport for the next triennium through three strategies, Increase Competitiveness, Maximize Market Exposure and Investment Facilitation and Promotion. The meeting also approved the transport work programme for 2022. Two major projects was approved for implementation namely, the Maritime Transport and Logistics Strategy as well as the Strategy to improve Air Connectivity in the Greater Caribbean Region.

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