

27th Intersessional Meeting Preparatory to the 30th Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers - Remarks by the Secretary General



It is a great honor for me to address you to celebrate this third statutory meeting of 2025 and my first Intersessional Meeting. This meeting is fundamental to the preparation of the 30th Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers, which will take place on a historic occasion in the trajectory of our Association under the leadership of the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia.

My mandate falls within a crucial and, at the same time, interesting era for the world and, of course, for the region. This poses a great challenge for our Association, especially as we commemorate 30 years since its foundation, but at the same time it represents a unique opportunity to position the ACS and the Greater Caribbean as a strong region, capable of projecting its wealth to the world and with the potential to make a difference on issues of great global relevance.

Climate change, and with it, the urgency to prevent and address natural disasters in the best way; infrastructure, vital for trade and the economies of our countries; the imminent new global governance; migration; full respect for the human rights of all people and the long-awaited peace, are issues that directly concern us, as they have a significant impact on the daily lives of people in our Greater Caribbean.

Under this context, we have no option but to renew ourselves.

In the Declaration of Antigua, we were mandated to undertake a process of revitalization of the Association and to make this a continuous process driven by the urgent need to strengthen the Association and its processes, realign priorities, build support systems and update capacities in accordance with the new realities, precisely because it is our duty to respond, as was done 30 years ago with the foundation of this mechanism, to current challenges.

Recognizing the potential of our Association and that need for revitalization, I want to share with you at least three of my priorities at the beginning of this mandate.

1. We have started the Strategic Planning process. We will begin by building the foundations, that is, by defining the Strategic Vision of our Association, which will outline the mission, vision and principles that will guide our actions.
2. We will strengthen cooperation. First among our membership and then with other countries and regions. As I said, the challenges are many, but we will make our capacity for alliance and the strength of our region play in our favor. South-South Cooperation will be key in this task. I am pleased to share with you that in recent days we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, which constitutes a good first step for technical and political coordination with a country of great relevance such as Brazil.
3. We will take advantage of multilateralism as a strategic platform to raise the visibility of the Greater Caribbean and position the ACS as a key mechanism for regional integration and cooperation. These spaces will allow us to strengthen strategic alliances, consolidate our collective voice and attract investments that promote concrete projects for the benefit of our Member States. In line with the revitalization process of the Association, multilateralism will be key to projecting the Greater Caribbean as a resilient, united region capable of generating tangible results for its sustainable development.

Returning to the words spoken a few days ago by the President of this Council, the Honorable Luis Gilberto Murillo, our mission will be to ensure that diplomacy in the Association is at the service of the people.

I consider it strategic to share these priorities with you within the framework of this meeting, because it is essential to ensure that our work is carried out in total synergy.

During this session, firstly, we will have the opportunity to hear the Report of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Subsequently, the report of my predecessor will be presented, detailing the activities carried out during the last months of his administration. For this point I will invite Mrs. Tricia Barrow, Executive Coordinator, to take the floor.

We will hear the reports of the Special Committees and the Caribbean Sea Commission, as well as the Report on Budget and Administration of the ACS. All these reports are an opportunity to identify areas for improvement, recognize good practices and consolidate our joint work.

A key point of the meeting will be the update on the preparations for the meetings to be held in May, such as the Ninth International Cooperation Conference, the Preparatory Meeting for the Thirtieth Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers, as well as the Tenth Summit of Heads of State and Government. The latter a space of great relevance for our Association.

The draft agendas for these spaces will also be presented and there will be an opportunity to make suggestions and recommendations to ensure a productive and high-impact week.

We will analyze the membership applications for the status of Associate Member, Observer or Social Actor, to present recommendations for consideration at the preparatory meeting for the Thirtieth Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Finally, we will share updates on the efforts made to fill the vacant positions in the Association. Having a team that brings together the skills, experience and willingness necessary to face the strategic challenges ahead will be key to moving forward with the revitalization that this Association needs.

Honorable ministers, distinguished delegations,

I am deeply honored to assume the mandate as your eighth Secretary General, a responsibility that I

assume with determination and inspiration. I begin this stage confident that together, with your commitment, courage and leadership, we will position the Greater Caribbean not only as a strategic region on the global stage, but as a benchmark of cooperation and resilience, promoting initiatives that positively transform the lives of those who inhabit it.

Cartagena, the port that saw the birth of our Association, will once again be the epicenter of our collective inspiration. Let us make this historic place not only bring together high-level people, but also mark the beginning of agreements and concrete actions that strengthen our region and demonstrate the transformative capacity of our Association.

I am convinced that the Association of Caribbean States has the potential and strength to be a fundamental pillar in the development of the Greater Caribbean. With that certainty, I wish us a fruitful meeting with concrete results that reflect our collective commitment.

Thank you very much!