

## **46th Meeting of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration of the ACS - Opening Remarks by the Secretary General of the ACS**



Good afternoon Mr. Chair and distinguished delegates. I extend to you a warm welcome to the 46th Meeting of the Special Committee on Budget and Administration. It is an honour for me to be with you.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you all the best for 2025—may it be a great year!

This meeting is taking place at a critical juncture for the world and for our region, as we face ever-evolving environmental, economic, and social challenges, to name a few. Therefore, it is imperative that the ACS continues to consolidate itself as a key mechanism for integration, cooperation, and concerted action.

Considering this context, and the nature and purpose of our Association, this year—following the mandate from the Antigua Declaration to undertake a process of revitalization of the Association—we will begin the first phase of the implementation of the Strategic Planning process, which will involve the development of the ACS's Strategic Vision.

It is essential that this Committee be aware of this revitalization process for two fundamental reasons:

1. First, because I am convinced that the staff and each organ of the Secretariat play a key role in our effort to achieve the goals we have set, always with a view to strengthening the Greater Caribbean.
2. Second, because efficient financial and administrative management is not only essential to materialize the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of this important regional mechanism, but also to ensure the long-term sustainability of our Association.

It is crucial that all this work be carried out in an organic, collaborative, and coordinated manner, maximizing synergy among the different actors and ensuring that our actions are aligned with

shared principles and priorities, highlighting the value the ACS brings to all its members.

In this context, and highlighting the importance of the work of this Committee, allow me to present the agenda items for this meeting. As scheduled, under Item 2 we will have the participation of the External Auditor of the ACS, Mr. Leslie Ramcharitar, Partner at Baker Tilly Montano Ramcharitar, who will present the Independent Auditors' Report for 2023. It is worth noting that if any concerns arise regarding the distributed audit documents, you will have the opportunity to raise them during this meeting.

Item 3 of the agenda will focus on the Current Status of Contributions, while Item 4 will address the Execution of the 2024 Budget. Item 5 will discuss the Revised Draft Ordinary Budget for 2025, based on the previously distributed documents. I will ask the Chief of Operations to present the relevant information regarding Items 3, 4, and 5.

On behalf of the Secretariat, I wish to express my deepest appreciation for your presence and commitment to this important meeting. I trust that today's discussions and agreements will contribute to strengthening the effectiveness of our work as an Association.

I wish you all the greatest success in this session and thank you once again for your invaluable participation.