

SECOND SUMMIT OF HEADS OF STATE AND/OR GOVERNMENT OF THE STATES, COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES

Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Dominican Republic,
16-17 April 1999

DECLARATION OF SANTO DOMINGO

We, the Heads of State and/or Government of the States, Countries and Territories of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), meeting in the City of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, Dominican Republic, on 16 and 17 April 1999;

Committed to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Convention Establishing the ACS, and recognising the validity of the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action on Tourism, Trade and Transport resulting from the historic First Summit held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, in August 1995 and the priorities identified for promoting regional integration, functional co-operation and co-ordination among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS;

Have decided to analyse the progress made by the ACS from Port-of-Spain 1995 to Santo Domingo 1999 and determine the projection of the Caribbean Region into the 21st Century; and therefore:

1. We identify tourism as the activity where the Association has achieved the most significant progress. We recognise that sustainable tourism constitutes an adequate response to the challenges of increasing rates of growth in employment and foreign exchange earnings, protecting and preserving the environment and natural resources, protecting cultural patrimony and values. We support community participation, as well as the involvement of local interests in aspects of the tourism development process, such as policy making, planning, management, ownership and the sharing of benefits generated by this activity. In this respect, we adopt the Declaration on the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean (STZC).
2. We reiterate our commitment to work jointly for the consolidation of an enhanced economic space for trade and investment, based on the principles of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), for which we shall continue to encourage integration and co-operation measures that permit the strengthening of intra-regional trade and investment.
3. We note with satisfaction the progress yielded in the area of trade liberalisation and economic integration in the sub-regional and bilateral spheres among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS. Within the framework of Article XX of the Convention Establishing the ACS, the interested countries will continue to encourage according to their priorities, trade agreements and tariff preferences, as identified in the initiative to establish the Caribbean Preferential Tariff (CPT).
4. We reiterate that the rationalisation and definition of regional transport policies are among the highest priorities of the ACS Plan of Action. We consider that transport must be the fundamental instrument for the development of tourism and trade in the region. In this respect, we emphasise our commitment to the objectives of the programme "Uniting the Caribbean by Air and Sea".
5. Based on the fulfilment of commitments made in Agenda 21, we support the activities for the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources. In addition, we support the effort of CARICOM to have the Caribbean Sea declared a Special Area in the context of Sustainable Development, and instruct that this subject be included in the Caribbean Environmental Strategy. For this purpose, a high level meeting of experts will be convened to study this topic. Participation in this meeting will be open to all members of the Association.
6. We consider the Caribbean Sea an invaluable asset and agree to give special priority to its preservation. We therefore deplore its ecological degradation and reject its continuous use for the transport of nuclear and toxic waste that may in any way cause a greater degradation of the Caribbean Sea.
7. We express our deepest solidarity with the countries and territories of the ACS affected by natural disasters in recent years, as well as by the extensive losses of lives and material resources, caused by these phenomena, which have increased their difficulties in implementing their programmes of economic and social development.
8. We instruct the national authorities responsible for the prevention, mitigation and preparation for disasters, to put into practice, as soon as possible, the implementation mechanisms of the Regional Co-operation Agreement in the Area of Natural Disasters, signed by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. In this respect, special focus will be placed on strengthening co-operation with the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and the Central American Co-ordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters (CEPRENAC).
9. We emphasise the importance of co-operation in science and technology as the basis for the promotion of sustainable development of the region and in this respect, we observe with satisfaction the progress made in the development of the Co-operation Mechanism in the area of Science and Technology.
10. We recognise the efforts to widen regional collaboration and co-operation with respect to the linguistic integration programme, the promotion of the teaching of the official languages of the ACS and the development of programmes of integration, co-operation and exchanges in the areas of education and culture. Similarly, we express our support for the activities being developed in the region with regard to the preservation of the cultural patrimony, and the promotion and defence of our cultural values.
11. We appreciate the importance of international co-operation for the development of the peoples and economies of the region, and we take note of the renewed effort by the ACS Special Fund to work in this direction.

12. We are aware that globalisation constitutes for the region an enormous challenge, that entails risks and opportunities. We therefore reiterate our interest in strengthening consultation and co-ordination of our positions in all those issues of mutual interest in the international agenda.
13. We agree that, faced with the rapid globalisation process, multilateralism is the indispensable response for dealing with its challenges and utilising its advantages, and in particular, for ensuring the effective exercise of the juridical equality of the States. We are aware moreover that the transparent and democratic functioning of multilateral bodies should be based on international law.
14. We reiterate our categorical rejection of all unilateral coercive measures, as well as the extraterritorial application of national laws by any State, since this is contrary to International Law, and moreover threatens the sovereignty of States and international co-existence. In this context, we reiterate our exhortation to the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the application of the Helms-Burton Law, in accordance with the Resolutions approved by the United Nations General Assembly.
15. We reaffirm our commitment to the preservation, consolidation and strengthening of democracy, political pluralism and the Rule of Law, as an ideal framework that allows respect for the defence and promotion of all human rights, including the right to development and basic liberties. In this respect, we reiterate that civic participation is an indispensable element in the creation of a new political culture. We also reiterate respect for the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention, in addition to the right of all peoples to build their own political system in peace, stability and justice.
16. We reiterate moreover the need to implement social and economic measures aimed at achieving integrated and harmonious development, based on equity, social justice, the raising of the standards of living of the population, and the eradication of poverty, with the human being as the fundamental focus of development plans.
17. We renew our commitment to work for the sustainable development of the Caribbean through co-operation and integration.
18. We recognise the differences in the size and levels of development of the economies of the countries of the ACS and attach special significance to the vulnerability of the small economies of our region. We will take into consideration these differences in the treatment of the countries in the activities being developed within the framework of the ACS. We will search for means, complementary with suitable internal policies that would afford opportunities to encourage participation and further the level of development of the small and less developed economies.
19. We urge the international community to strengthen programmes of technical and financial assistance, human resource training, and the transfer of technology, in order to improve the opportunities for the small and less developed economies to prosper in the international system.
20. In this context, we agree that there is a need to promote co-operation and concerted action among the Member States and Associate Members of the ACS, so as to increase the negotiating capability of our region in international fora.
21. We reaffirm the principles adopted at the First ACS Summit, with regard to the international problem of the illicit traffic of drugs and related crimes, which represents a serious threat to tourism, trade and transport, and indeed, endangers the sovereignty and security of each State.
22. We reiterate the principles governing international co-operation for dealing with the international problem of the illicit traffic of drugs and related crimes, including shared responsibility, the global, integrated and balanced approach, unrestricted respect for the principles of International Law, in particular those of sovereignty and territorial integrity. We therefore strongly reject every type of intervention in the internal matters of States and the extraterritorial application of domestic laws and unilateral measures. In this respect, we agree that programmes, actions and results must be considered within an agreed intergovernmental framework.
23. We are aware of the great wealth of the cultural diversity in the Caribbean region and as a result, we agree to increase efforts in defence of our cultural identity, to protect and promote its expressions, given that culture is one of the fundamental bases for the integration of the Caribbean peoples.
24. We reiterate the commitment of our governments to work in close collaboration in order to contribute to the success of the European Union/Latin America and the Caribbean Summit, which constitutes an exceptional opportunity for promoting concerted action among ACS Members, increasing co-operation and enhancing existing dialogues and agreements between the two regions. To this end, we will promote the Latin American and Caribbean proposal, adopted in Mexico City, in December 1998, aimed at identifying inter-regional co-operation activities that contribute to enhancing relations with the countries of the European Union.
25. This Summit will also be a special occasion to establish a direct and frank dialogue with the leaders of the European Union, in order to advance in a decisive manner economic relations between both regions, especially in the areas of trade and investment, as well as to promote the convergence of efforts to restore international financial stability and to redress the continued imbalances that might provoke a global recession.
26. We call for the optimisation of the potential and opportunities provided by the sectoral links among the programmes of the ACS and collaboration with relevant regional and national organisations, in order to ensure increasing complementarity among the activities of Member States and Associate Members.
27. We express our deep gratitude to the President of the Dominican Republic, His Excellency Leonel Fernández, and to the Government and people of the Dominican Republic, for the warmth, friendliness and lavish hospitality accorded to us throughout the Second Summit.

