

ACTIVITIES OF THE ACS DURING 2002 CONCERNING THE CARIBBEAN SEA INITIATIVE

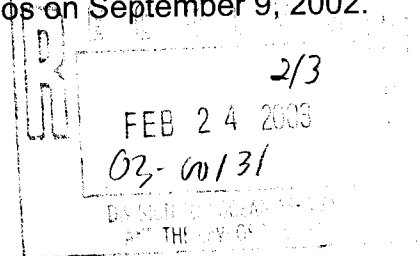
On March 14-15, 2002, the 19th Session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee ("CDCC") of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ("ECLAC"), in Port of Spain, agreed that, in order to restore the required momentum into the process of having the Caribbean Sea declared a Special Area in the context of Sustainable Development, the ECLAC/CDCC Secretariat should adopt the lead role in the execution of the technical work required for the attainment of the objectives of the original proposal. To this end, the Director of ECLAC/CDCC met with the ACS Secretary General on March 25, 2002, to propose that ECLAC/CDCC and the ACS work within their respective strengths and competencies, on the implementation of UNGA Resolution 55/203 towards the international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the context of Sustainable Development. In this respect, ECLAC/CDCC would assume the lead technical role and the ACS would maintain political leadership of the initiative.

This understanding was subsequently endorsed by the 8th Meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism of the ACS, on April 4-5, which *inter alia*:

- Agreed in principle with the proposal that ECLAC/CDCC spearhead the execution of the technical work, provided that the entire membership of the ACS is recognized in the ECLAC/CDCC plan of action and that concrete recommendations for political support would emanate for the consideration of the ACS Ministerial Council; and
- Requested the ACS Secretariat to report to the 6th Intersessional Preparatory Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the ACS, on joint actions undertaken with ECLAC/CDCC to advance the implementation of Resolution 55/203 towards the international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the context of Sustainable Development.

The ACS presented its report to the 6th Intersessional Preparatory Meeting held July 11-12, 2002 in Port of Spain which reiterated the importance of the ACS maintaining political leadership in having the Caribbean Sea declared a Special Area in the context of Sustainable Development and urged all Members States and Associate Members to commit technical resources and political will to advancing the process.

The Secretary General attended consultations with ECLAC/CDCC, H.E. Ambassador Teresa Marshall, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Barbados and several officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Environment of Barbados. These consultations were held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bridgetown, Barbados on September 9, 2002.



The technical work which ECLAC/CDCC would undertake was identified as follows:

- The elaboration of an Operational Framework comprising an identification of the major processes and activities that need to be executed towards the further development and early implementation of the Caribbean Sea Proposal;
- Detailed identification of the specific activities, technical and others, that are required;
- Identification of issues and activities of priority concern, incorporating a schedule for the implementation of specific activities, grouped according to the respective phases envisaged for their execution; and
- Contribution to the identification and allocation of roles and responsibilities among countries, individual and agencies, based on the technical and other activities identified for pursuit under the preceding headings.

As a result of the consultations in Barbados, the following decisions were taken:

- The ACS will explore funding for a meeting of technical experts. Funds have since been identified in the ACS budget for this purpose. Other agencies, including UNEP, will be approached for additional funding and also to assist in the identification of experts to participate in the meeting of technical experts.
- ECLAC/CDCC will work along the lines indicated in the paper presented. In this regard, consultants have been appointed to explore existing approaches to ocean management and existing legal instruments and considerations which may affect the implementation of the Caribbean Sea initiative.
- Technical experts are to be identified to guide the technical and political preparation of the Caribbean Sea initiative. In this regard, Terms of reference for the technical advisory group have been prepared. It is anticipated that a meeting of technical experts may be convened early this year.

The Caribbean Sea initiative was considered during the 8th Ordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the ACS held in Belize City, Belize, November 29, 2002. The collaboration between the ACS and ECLAC/CDCC was further endorsed.

The occasion of the SIDS+10 conference in 2004 will provide an opportunity to present a more comprehensive proposal, incorporating all the necessary legal, technical and political elements, with the objective of advancing towards the international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the context of Sustainable Development. In the interim, the ACS together with ECLAC/CDCC will continue to pursue the Caribbean Sea initiative.

