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Fifty-third session

REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ITEM IN THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA
OF THE FIFTY-THIRD SESSION

OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN STATES IN THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Letter dated 23 June 1998 from the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our Governments, we have the honour to request you, pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-third regular session of the General Assembly an item entitled "Observer status for the Association of Caribbean States in the General Assembly". Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we attach an explanatory memorandum (see annex I) and a draft resolution (see annex II).

(Signed) Mr. John William ASHE
Chargé d'affaires of the
Permanent Mission of Antigua and
Barbuda to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Carlston B. BOUCHER
Permanent Representative
of Barbados to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Maurice MOORE
Permanent Representative
of the Bahamas to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Alfonso GAHONA
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Belize
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Andelfo J. GARCIA
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Colombia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Bruno RODRÍGUEZ-PARRILLA
Permanent Representative
of Cuba to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Luis LITHGOW
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the Dominican
Republic to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Julio Armando MARTINI HERRERA
Permanent Representative of Guatemala
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Robert MILLETTE
Permanent Representative
of Grenada to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Hugo NOÉ-PINO
Permanent Representative
of Honduras to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Emanuel TELLO
Permanent Representative
of Mexico to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Aquilino BOYD
Permanent Representative
of Panama to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Herbert G. V. YOUNG
Permanent Representative of Saint
Vincent and the Grenadines to the
United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Michel Orlando KERPENS
Chargé d'affaires of the
Permanent Mission of Suriname
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Norman M. MONAGAS-LESSEUR
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Venezuela
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Fernando BERROCAL SOTO
Permanent Representative
of Costa Rica to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Simon Paul RICHARDS
Permanent Representative
of Dominica to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Ricardo CASTANEDA-CORNEJO
Permanent Representative
of El Salvador to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Samuel INSANALLY
Permanent Representative
of Guyana to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Pierre LELONG
Permanent Representative
of Haiti to the United Nations

(Signed) Miss M. Patricia DURRANT
Permanent Representative
of Jamaica to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Enrique PAGUAGUA FERNÁNDEZ
Permanent Representative
of Nicaragua to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. Kevin ISAAC
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of St. Kitts
and Nevis to the United Nations

(Signed) Ms. Sonia R. LEONCE
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Saint Lucia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Mr. George William MCKENZIE
Permanent Representative of Trinidad
and Tobago to the United Nations

ANNEX I

[Original: English and Spanish]

Explanatory memorandum

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) came into being on 4 August 1995, date of the entry into force of the Convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States, which had been adopted at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 24 July 1994. The members of ACS are Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela.

In addition, France (in respect of French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique) and the Netherlands Antilles have joined the Association as associate members. Participation in this capacity is open to Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands.

Observer status has been granted to Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Italy, the Netherlands (in respect of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba), Morocco, Peru, the Russian Federation and Spain.

The following regional organizations have been granted the status of founding observers of the ACS: the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Latin American Economic System (SELA), and the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA). The Convention also provides for participation by social actors.

In accordance with article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention was registered with the United Nations Secretariat on 1 November 1995.

The basic purposes of the ACS are to facilitate consultation, cooperation and concerted action in order to identify and promote the implementation of policies and programmes seeking to:

(a) Harness, utilize and develop the collective capabilities of the Caribbean region to achieve sustained cultural, social, scientific and technological advancement;

(b) Develop the potential of the Caribbean Sea through interaction among Member States and with third parties;

(c) Promote an enhanced economic space for trade and investment with opportunities for cooperation and concerted action, in order to increase the benefits which accrue to the peoples of the Caribbean from their resources and assets, including the Caribbean Sea;

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(d) Establish, consolidate and augment, as appropriate, institutional structures and cooperative arrangements responsive to the various cultural identities, developmental needs and normative systems within the region.

For the purpose of achieving these aims, ACS promotes among its members the following activities:

(a) Economic integration, including the liberalization of trade, investment, transportation and other related areas;

(b) Discussion on matters of common interest for the purpose of facilitating active and coordinated participation of the region in the various multilateral forums;

(c) Formation and implementation of policies and programmes for functional cooperation in the above-mentioned fields;

(d) Preservation of the environment and the conservation of natural resources of the region and especially the Caribbean Sea;

(e) Strengthening of friendly relationships among Governments and peoples of the Caribbean;

(f) Consultation, cooperation and concerted action in such other areas as may be agreed upon.

In August 1995 the first summit of heads of State and Government of ACS was held at Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted at this meeting identified three sectors, tourism, trade and transport, as key areas for the creation of a more viable economic space and the advancement of the integration process in the Caribbean.

Since then the Ministerial Council, permanent organ of ACS, has, for the purpose of furthering the achievement of the aims of ACS, held three ordinary meetings. They have taken place, in December 1995, December 1996 and November 1997 at, respectively, Guatemala City, Havana and Cartagena, Colombia. The Ministerial Council has established special committees to deal with matters that include: trade and external economic relations; the protection and conservation of the environment and of the Caribbean Sea; natural resources; science, technology, health, education and culture; and tourism and transport. There has also been established a working group on natural resources under the auspices of the Committee for the Protection and Conservation of the Environment and of the Caribbean Sea.

In its endeavour to implement the Plan of Action of Tourism, Trade and Transport, the Special Committee on Tourism has formulated Principles and Strategies for the establishment of a Sustainable Tourism Zone in the Caribbean, the first zone of this type in the world; the Special Committee on Trade and External Economic Relations has begun to work on the development of an ACS information system and a payment system to promote opportunities for trade and investment among ACS member States; the technical group on transportation has outlined the basic principles, objectives and activities for the development of

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an action plan for 1998, aiming at the realization of the ideal of uniting the Caribbean region by air and sea. It has also been decided to create a mechanism for disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness with a view to its becoming operational in 1998, on the basis of proposals formulated by the ACS secretariat, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CERA), the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPRENAC), and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); the Special Committee on Science, Technology, Education, Health and Culture is developing a network for cooperation in areas of common interest in science and technology; and the ACS information and communication network continues to develop through the establishment of ever more fluid communication links among member States.

In order to advance the work of ACS, the ACS secretariat, headquartered in Port of Spain, has been charged with coordinating the various activities and cooperating with the founding observers of ACS as well as with other regional, hemispheric and international agencies.

As a regional organization composed of and representing 25 member States which are also Members of the United Nations, ACS is convinced that possession of observer status in the United Nations General Assembly would be extremely beneficial to it.

Accordingly, on 24 February 1998, the bureau of the Ministerial Council of ACS asked that the necessary steps be taken in order that ACS be granted observer status in the General Assembly of the United Nations.

ANNEX II

[Original: English]

Draft resolution

Observer status for the Association of Caribbean States
in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind that the purposes of the Association of Caribbean States, as enunciated in the convention by which it was established, and which has been registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations, are consistent with those of the United Nations,

Considering that, accordingly, it is mutually advantageous to provide for cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Caribbean States,

Taking note of the desire of the Association of Caribbean States for the establishment of such cooperation,

1. Decides to invite the Association of Caribbean States to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to implement the present resolution.
