

## Joint Conference Communiqué

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From September 4 until September 7, 2007 forty representatives from sixteen different OCT's, DOM's and ACP's along with regional SME organizations from within the Caribbean gathered in Willemstad, Curacao (The Netherlands Antilles), for the first OCTA Regional SME Programme Planning Conference.

The conference was also attended by representatives from the Overseas Countries and Territories Association, European Investment Bank, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and CARICOM.

The overall objective of this conference was two-fold:

1. To provide a platform for dialogue and enhance as well as improve the institutional/organizational capacity of SME Intermediaries so as to develop local and regional SME cooperation;
2. To utilize SME Intermediaries network potentials and making maximum use of competitive modalities

The purpose of the conference has been formulated as follows;

1. To build understanding between the participating countries on the strength and weaknesses of their specific SME sectors, their needs and their intermediaries;
2. To help participants explore common ground and seek ways forward for a more developed regional cooperation which is result-oriented, effective, practical and based on legitimate expectations of all participants (stakeholders)
3. To agree on a joint communiqué defining the parameters of a future regional SME Intermediary support initiative.

Within four different working groups participants thoroughly discussed in a constructive manner the following issues dealing with SME development in the region:

1. The need and tools of SME Business Training and Advisory Services;
2. Business Information and Regional SME financing opportunities;
3. SME Regional cooperation: threats and opportunities;
4. SME Policies; Quo Vadis!

The results and main points of discussion of these working groups have been presented and are outlined in detail in the annex hereto.

The participants expressed their full interest and cooperation in pursuing this type of discussion, dialogue and exchange of experience on an ongoing voluntary basis.

It was agreed that the participating bodies who so wish would work initially on a more in-depth needs, potential and capacity assessment with a view to subsequently formulating a regional project proposal to submit to potential funding agencies notably the EU.

Participants recognize that this process can best be taken forward by a government entity of one of the participating countries or territories which has the necessary capacity to bring forward and promote the intended regional cooperation.

The participants noted that the Department for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Antilles has expressed its willingness to take lead responsibility in close cooperation and partnership with the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC), Caribbean Association of Small and Medium Enterprise (CASME) and Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export).

All interested parties are to ascertain the level of commitment to coordinate and facilitate the preparation of a proposal and set the process in motion for:

1. The development and formulation of a regional SME Intermediaries Support programme proposal;
2. Holding another regional SME Intermediaries meeting a year from now.

The participants noted with appreciation the offer of the Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association of the British Virgin Islands and the Jamaica Business Development Centre to explore the possibility of hosting such a meeting.

The Department for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Antilles in close cooperation and partnership with the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC), the Caribbean Association of Small and Medium Enterprise (CASME) and the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export), undertakes fully to inform on a regular basis all participants in this meeting and other interested parties of developments in above mentioned process and to ensure that the process proceeds on the basis of consensus and full transparency.

The participants expressed their appreciation to the Department for Development Cooperation, the Overseas Countries and Territories Association and the European Commission for having hosted and sponsored this regional conference.

Willemstad September 7, 2007

Anguilla

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Mr. Calvin Bartlett*



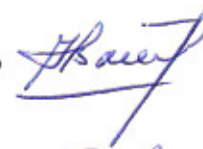
Consultant to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Ms. Yvette de Laubanque*

Aruba

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mrs. Lauren Dix



Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry, Mr. Harry Bareño



Barbados

Caribbean Association of Small and Medium Enterprises, Ms. Lynette Holder




Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, Mr. James Campbell



British Virgin Islands

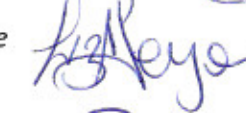
Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association, Mr. John Shirley



Chamber of Commerce and Hotel Association, Mrs. Violet Gaul

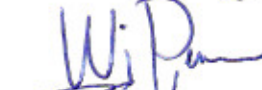


Department of Trade and Consumer Affairs, Ms. Lizette George



Cayman Islands

Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Wil Pineau



Cayman Islands Investment Bureau, Mr. Dax Basdeo



French Guyana

The Association des Moyennes et Petites Industries, Mr. Erik Pollien



Montserrat

Development Unit Ministry of Finance Economic Development and Trade, Ms. Cynthia Farrell

Montserrat Development Corporation, Ms. Laurine Fenton

Jamaica

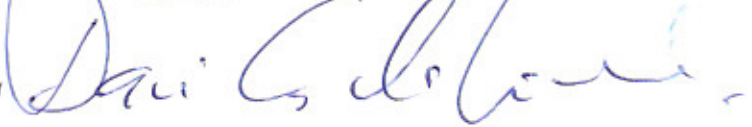
Jamaica Trade and Invest, Mrs. Mary Gooden



Jamaica Business Development Centre, Mr. Harold Davis

Island Territory Bonaire

Centrum Kleinbedrijf Bonaire, Mr. Davi de Lima



Island Territory Curacao

Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Kirsten Romer



KORPODEKO, Mr. Arthur Rosaria

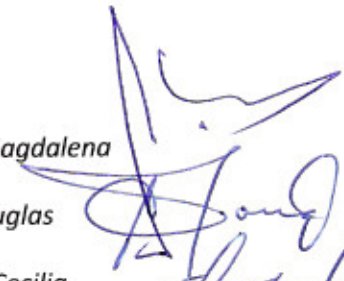
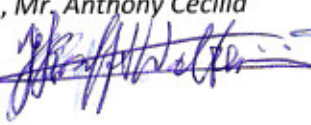




ADECK/SEDECK (Curacao Small Business Association), Mr. Gabriel Magdalena

ADECK/SEDECK (Curacao Small Business Association), Mr. Agnel Douglas

ADECK/SEDECK (Curacao Small Business Association), Mr. Anthony Cecilia

Fondo Sosial pa Kombati Pobresa, Mr. Harry Walters

Dienst Economische Zaken, Ms. Fiona Curie

Dienst Economische Zaken, Mr. Ramon Chong

Island Territory Saba

SESNA Unit Saba, Ms. Alida Heilbron



Island Territory Sint Maarten

Department of Economic Policy and Research, Ms. Lucy Gibbes

Small Business Development Foundation, Mrs. Veronica Webster



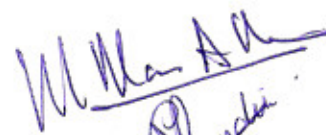
Island Territory Sint Eustatius

Small Enterprise Foundation, Mrs. Arlene Spinner – Schmidt

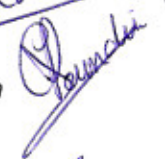


Republic of Suriname

Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Max Man A Hing



Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, Ms. Cinthia Ramdin



Turks and Caicos

Providenciales Chamber of Commerce, Mrs. Tina Fenimore



The Netherlands Antilles

Department for Development Cooperation, Mr. Ralph James

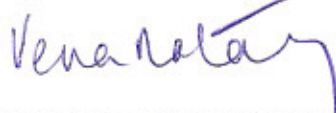


Directorate of Economic Affairs, Mr. Stephen Mambi



Regional Organisations

Caribbean Export, Ms. Veona Maloney



Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce, Mr. Ludwig Ouenniche

