

## Message of Appreciation

from the

CARIFORUM Principal Negotiator to CARIFORUM Stakeholders

The conclusion of the CARIFORUM –EU EPA negotiations is a poignant moment of distinction in the history of this Region. Through this achievement, we have, once again, collectively attested our maturation as a people and our capacity to command our course of development for the benefit of our generation and for generations to come.

The Caribbean Group of countries is the first to engage and complete an EPA with Europe. As such, we are pioneers in redefining our relationships with an important historical trading partner. We have through this agreement shifted the alignment of our economic history with Europe and have mapped a new course towards prosperity and the development of the Caribbean people.

The task has not been simple. Indeed, few meaningful endeavors are easy to dispatch. I therefore wish to commend the herculean efforts of all regional stakeholders across all spheres of government and civil society who participated in this process since its advent. Special accolades must be afforded to the technical experts, academics, professionals, the members of the private sector, and the leadership of the NGO community. In particular, your participation in the technical and public discourse, and extensive, erudite contributions during the Meetings of the Technical Working Group have sealed a civil ownership of this negotiation process, which is unparalleled in many other corners of the world.

As we, not immodestly, celebrate our achievement, I wish, at this time, to also extend warmest Season's Greetings to all. May the confidence we feel collectively serve us well in the New Year.