



Statement on Private Sector Online Forum: “ The Impact of Trade negotiations on Business Development Strategies”- August 8, 2006, 1-3 pm

I would like to thank those who participated in the Online forum yesterday on “The impact of trade negotiations on Business development strategies”. From all accounts the forum was a success and it is indeed with deep satisfaction that we were able to host such an innovative dialogue. The online forum had almost 200 visits, and there were 30 posts during the session. We had participation from Jamaica, Haiti, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Trinidad.

Discussions mainly concentrated on the Economic Partnership agreement negotiations with the EU and proposals were made to widen the participation of the private sector. Other issues discussed included the aggressive timeline for trade discussions and the slower track approach to preparation for globalisation by most of the region’s private sector.

The issue of the institutional capacity of private sector organizations (PSOs) such as chambers of commerce and manufacturers associations, was also a critical point. The firms in the forum presented specific market access problems and encouraged a proactive “Aid for Trade” position in the EPA and all other discussions.

This session will be held at least quarterly, and we are encouraging continued participation as these sessions are a new and innovative way to build positions on trade from the ground up.

Again, thanks for your participation, and we encourage those who did not participate this time, not to miss the next Online forum.

Amb. Richard. L. Bernal, O.J
Director General, CRNM