**Joint Statement from the Second Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Consultative Committee**

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1. The Second Meeting of the CARIFORUM-EU Consultative Committee (CC) took place on 18 and 19 April, 2016 in Brussels, co-chaired from the EU side by Brenda King (European Economic and Social Committee) and from the CARIFORUM side by Renwick Rose (Caribbean Policy Development Centre). According to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the Cariforum States and the European Union, the task of the CC is to assist the Joint CARIFORUM-EU Council in promoting dialogue and cooperation between representatives of organisations of civil society. The agreement also recognises the role of the CC in monitoring the implementation of all economic, social and environmental aspects of the EPA and in strengthening dialogue between representatives of civil society.
2. The CC acknowledged that its primary role is: (1) to support the implementation of the relevant sustainable development aspects of the EPA; (2) to identify issues relevant to the implementation of the Agreement; and (3) to engage actively in the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Agreement on civil society stakeholders in the respective regions.
3. The CC agreed that both the first and second meetings of the CC were productive. However, there remain challenges which affect the efficient operation of the CC and the hosting of annual meetings.
4. The CC reiterated its statement made during the first meeting on 13-14 November 2014 which identified some of the prerequisites needed for the EPA to generate tangible results such as:
5. raising awareness of the opportunities and benefits of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA in the CARIFORUM countries, and in particular amongst SMEs;
6. building more capacity to deal with Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) requirements that prevent actual market access;
7. promoting the EU Export Helpdesk database and enlarging it by including also trade in services;
8. setting up and promoting a website listing EPA-related support and activities for companies and other civil society organisations;
9. fully developing provisions on services and intellectual property rights
10. The CC was briefed by the European Commission and the CARIFORUM Directorate about latest developments on the implementation of the EPA, its five-year review and the Monitoring & Evaluation mechanism. Following a debate on the the role of the Consultative Committee on the Monitoring and Evaluation of the EPA, gaps were identified for which several recommendations were made (see *Recommendations* below).
11. The CC expressed appreciation for the information provided by the European Commission on the projects under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Programme which are related to the implementation of the EPA. It also reviewed ongoing projects related to civil society capacity building and agreed that such projects should be duly taken into consideration and assessed in the framework of the monitoring and evaluation of the EPA.
12. The CC also raised other issues beyond the strict implementation of the EPA that can seriously affect or undermine the achievement of its objectives of trade and competitiveness, such as the lack of visa facilitation for trade in services.
13. The CC also discussed the Future of EU-ACP Relations, expressing concern about the possible impact that the expiry of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) might have on the EPA (as the EPA makes explicit reference to the CPA). The CC also recommended a post-Cotonou Framework aiming at:

## achieving a modern and effective "partnership of equals" beyond a donor-recipient relationship, recognising the universality of challenges such as inclusiveness, income inequality, youth unemployment, climate change, migration, security, attainment of SDGs, and developing also South-South and triangular frameworks of cooperation.

## guaranteeing the involvement and financial support of civil society organisations from the conception, inception through the monitoring and impact assessment on the sustainable development of the Parties.

*RECOMMENDATIONS ON EPA IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION:*

1. The CC appreciates the efforts of the Parties to analyse the past 5-year review and to set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism in preparation for future reviews. Further, it asks the Parties to involve the CC in the setting up of this monitoring and evaluation mechanism in their respective regions.
2. The CC calls on the EPA bodies to ensure the collection and availability of sufficient statistical evidence and to share and provide access to relevant documents to be discussed at their meetings. This is essential for an effective monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, the CC needs to be included in their ongoing discussions on monitoring indicators for EPAs in order to build on and identify those indicators that allow for synergies with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) monitoring processes.
3. In order to play an active role in the EPA monitoring and evaluation and to participate in ongoing discussions about the results and impacts of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA implementation, the CC or its EU or Cariforum side should take part in the evaluation of the information collected, compiled and reported by the relevant regional and/or national monitoring mechanisms. The CC should also play a role in the presentation and dissemination of the information.

*RECOMMENDATIONS ON NECESSARY RESOURCES FOR THE CC FUNCTIONING:*

1. The CC urges the Parties to allocate and disburse the necessary budget for its functioning. This budget should be linked to an agreed work plan and vested in the respective rotating secretariats. The CC is currently developing its work plan for the future.

*OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:*

1. The CC reminds that European Union Member States should honour commitments made to provide financial support for the EPA implementation.

Finally, the CC warmly acknowledged the contribution and support of the secretariat and the Parties and expressed anticipation of a continued, fruitful and productive relationship. The CC expects a timely renewal of mandate and is keen to hold its next meeting in the Caribbean before the expiry of the current one.

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