



## Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery

# Press Release

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, JAMPRO Building  
18 Trafalgar Road  
Kingston 5, JAMAICA

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, The Mutual Building  
Hastings Main Road, Hastings  
Christ Church, BARBADOS

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*Contact:*

Marsha Drakes, Tel: (246) 430-1678  
[marsha.drakes@crnm.org](mailto:marsha.drakes@crnm.org)

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For Immediate Release:  
**October 20, 2008**

No. 13/2008

### **GUYANA BECOMES 14<sup>TH</sup> SIGNATORY TO THE CARIFORUM-EC EPA**

**CHRIST CHURCH, BARBADOS** – 13 CARIFORUM Member States and Europe signed the CARIFORUM-European Community (EC) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) last week in a ceremony which took place in Barbados. Today, Monday October 20, 2008, the Head of Mission of Guyana to the European Community (EC), H.E. Ambassador Patrick Gomes, appended his signature to the Agreement on behalf of the Government of Guyana at the Headquarters of the Council of the European Union in Brussels.

The Government of Haiti, which is addressing national hurricane recovery priorities, has requested more time to review the EPA.

The Agreement will officially enter into force pending the completion of the process of ratification by the member states. However, until then CARIFORUM and Europe will provisionally apply the EPA. Through provisional application both sides will be able to benefit from the terms of the Agreement.

In accordance with the provisions of the Agreement, CARIFORUM member states will have until October 31 2008 to make the legislative changes required to give effect to provisional application. This short time window necessitates immediate action by the member states.

Once provisional application is in effect, CARIFORUM Member States can turn their attention to the task of EPA implementation. CARIFORUM will urgently need to make arrangements to implement this agreement at a number of levels – regional, sub-regional and national. Furthermore, the participation of a myriad of actors, including the private sector and civil society will be paramount to the success of the implementation process.

Since inputs and responsibilities will vary from one entity to another, effective implementation will also require the Heads of Government and COTED to clearly establish those individual and collective responsibilities and to harmonize the associated inputs so that efforts can be synchronized and implementation effected in a timely fashion.

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