

**Presentation by the Director of Trade Development and External Economic Relations on "Trade facilitation in the ACS region."**

**What is Trade Facilitation**

- Trade facilitation covers all the steps that can be taken to smooth and facilitate the flow of trade.
- WTO Definition: "the simplification and harmonization of international trade procedures" covering the "activities, practices and formalities involved in collecting, presenting, communicating and processing data required for the movement of goods in international trade".
- The Doha Round covers: "freedom of transit, fees and formalities related to importing and exporting and transparency of trade regulations – which essentially relates to border procedures such as customs and port procedures, and transport formalities."

**Why is Trade Facilitation Important?**

- Trade facilitation energizes the flow of goods and stimulates economic dynamism and wellbeing. It therefore improves the cost efficiency of doing business. An inefficient, constrained flow of goods creates a stagnant economy and poor economic performance.
- Trade facilitation would benefit all economies because it ultimately attracts Foreign Direct Investment
- Businesses will make substantial gains through trade facilitation. Trade facilitation promotes greater transparency, more consistent and simplified procedures, whilst also lowering transaction costs and reducing clearance times.
- For government, trade facilitation enables improved collection of customs revenue; through the effective implementation of modern risk management techniques it also improves supply chain security and enables limited resource to be focused on high-risk transactions.

## **Status within the ACS Region**

**In the Greater Caribbean Region Trade facilitation concerns relate to:**

- Harmonization and Standardization of customs procedures
- The issuance of Business Visas
- Procedures, Regulations for Investment, and Doing Business

## **Harmonization and Standardization of customs procedures**

- Among ACS Member States there is a vast difference in the custom systems this has become a real concern and obstacle to the development of greater and improved economic relations in the Region.
- It is important that steps be taken towards simplification, standardization and harmonization of custom procedures and formalities promoting quicker, safer, and efficient trade in the ACS Region.

## **The Working Group on Customs Facilitation**

- Undertake an examination of the customs systems existing throughout the ACS Region (in each member country)
- Identify other Regional initiatives addressing customs facilitation, which can be supported or cooperation/partnership established to further the efforts within the ACS Region.
- Identify areas where simplification and harmonization in custom procedures can be achieved to the benefit of stakeholders in the Greater Caribbean Region.
- Address ways of improving access to relevant data as it relates to customs procedures and regulations etc.
- Propose a plan of action towards the possible signing of an agreement for simplification of import procedures through standardization and harmonization of customs certificates, and digitization of customs formalities for Members to promote quick, safe and efficient trade in the ACS Region.
- Undertake review of the capabilities, facilities and infrastructure available within the ACS Region (in each Member State)

## Upcoming Activities

- Seminar on E-regulations scheduled to be held in November 2012.
- First meeting of the Working Group on Customs Facilitation to be held on January 23rd 2013.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Trade Directorate is fully committed to the consolidation of an enhanced economic space for trade and investment within the Greater Caribbean, and continues to work towards fulfilling this mandate.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**

**GRACIAS POR SU ATENCION**

**MERCI POUR VOTRE ATTENTION**