DIALOGUE ON IDENTIFYING EXISTING TRADE OPPORTUNITIES AMONG MEMBER STATES OF THE GREATER CARIBBEAN REGION : 27th Meeting of the Special Committee on Trade Development and External Economic Relations

Port of Spain (July 10, 2012) – The Association of Caribbean States, through the Directorate of Trade Development and External Economic Relations will convene the 27th Meeting of the Special Committee on Trade Development and External Economic Relations at its Headquarters in Port of Spain, on July 11th and 12th.

This meeting will be attended by the Minister of Trade and Industry of the Republic of Haiti, the Honourable Wilson Laleau in his capacity as Chair of the Special Committee on Trade, as well as other representatives from regional and international organisations such as CARICOM, Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Caribbean Export Development Agency, and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

The meeting of the Special Committee will engage participants in a round-table dialogue focusing on the identification of specific areas for cooperation and collaboration among Member States, as well as identifying initiatives to promote trade and investment in the Region. It will also examine areas of common interest and convergence, that may be addressed at the regional level, and the solutions which can be provided through cooperation amongst regional and international bodies.

Another topic for discussion includes matters relating to Trade Facilitation within the ACS Greater Caribbean Region. This of Trade Facilitation covers critical elements such as the Harmonization and Standardization of Customs Procedures, the issuance of Business Visas, and the Efficiency of doing

business, all of which were recognized by the 26th Special Committee on Trade as areas which have posed challenges for the growth and enhancement of trade in the ACS Region. As a result, the establishment of a Working Group on Trade Facilitation was mandated with the expectation of successfully addressing these matters.

Representative from UNCTAD, Mr. Nelson Perez, is also scheduled to make a presentation on the UNCTAD E-Regulations programme, and the requirements necessary to transfer this system to the ACS countries, in order to promote transparency and efficiency, with respect to the administrative procedures and regulations associated with doing business.

The meeting will also address uncoming initiatives – the Regional Symposium on Tourism, SME Development and Entrepreneurial Strengthening in the Greater Caribbean. This symposium represents the collaborative effort of the Directorates of Trade and Tourism of the ACS.

The meeting will be presided by Haiti as Chair of the Special Committee on Trade, along with the Vice-Chairs, Guadeloupe and Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic as Rapporteur.