

## **Regional Workshop on Public Policies to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)**



### **ACS SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMEs IN THE REGION**

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago (August 19th 2014) - The Secretariat of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) hosted a two day Regional Workshop on Public Policies to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Antonio Leone, Programme Coordinator for the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA). Among those delivering remarks at the opening ceremony included His Excellency Ambassador Alfonso Múnera, Secretary General of the ACS and The Honourable Errol Mc Leod, Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development of Trinidad and Tobago.

Ambassador Múnera in his welcoming address expressed that the development of SMEs is one of the priority areas of economic development for ACS Member Countries. He further posited that the ACS “recognizes and appreciates the valuable role that governments in the region have played as part of its drive to establish national powerful strategies, with the aim of providing comprehensive answers to the difficulties facing SMEs.”

Following on from the Secretary General’s address, Minister Mc Leod stressed the importance of supporting the development of SMEs. He stated that, “It is important that, as public policy stakeholders, we ensure that an effective entrepreneurship ecosystem is in place to support the development of SMEs.” He further added that “this collaboration can help us develop a framework to support an effective entrepreneurship network throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, thus making it easier for our entrepreneurs to market themselves.”

Mr. Leone echoed the sentiments of the former speakers, identifying areas in which SMEs can be improved. He stated that “the main objective of public policy in the area of SMEs is to develop more businesses at the local, regional and national sectors in order to increase their competitiveness and to respond efficiently to the market dynamics.”

Representatives from The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), made presentations on public policies from their respective countries and the support for this sector at the subregional level. Other items tabled for discussion were as follows; policies on productive coordination and innovation, public policies for SMEs and the development of entrepreneurship, as well as SMEs internationalization.

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#### About the ACS

The Association of Caribbean States is the organization for consultation, cooperation and concerted action in trade, transport, sustainable tourism and natural disasters in the Greater Caribbean. Its Member States are Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela. Its Associate Members are Aruba, Curacao, (France on behalf of French Guiana, Saint Barthelemy and Saint Martin), Guadeloupe, Martinique, Sint Maarten and (The Netherlands on behalf of Bonaire, Saba, and Sint Eustatius).

For further information, please contact:

Michelle Garcia

Communications Officer

Association of Caribbean States

E-mail: [communications@acs-aec.org](mailto:communications@acs-aec.org)

Tel: 1-868-622-9575

Fax: 1-868-622-1653