Welcome
The CROSQ Standard newsletter aims to:

- Raise awareness about the necessity for Standards, Metrology and Accreditation;
- Inform the Standards Bureaux in the region and the CARICOM Member States about the activities of CROSQ.

Published four times a year, the newsletter is distributed to every Member State of CARICOM. All are encouraged to send articles, photos and updates on their activities, relating to international trade, metrology, accreditation, and the development of standards.

Feedback, comments and submissions are welcome and should be sent to newsletter@crosq.org.

The newsletter is compiled, formatted and pre-edited by the Information Systems Officer, with contributions from the CROSQ team and other partner organizations.

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Message from the CEO of CROSQ
In April 2009, CROSQ began implementing its 3-year Strategic Plan (2009-2012), under the themes: Development of Regional Standards, Enhanced Capability in Metrology, Conformity Assessment and Accreditation, and Improving Regional Quality Culture, Organisational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability. Some of these are highlighted below.

Donor-funded projects have made significant contributions to CROSQ’s development over the last few years, with a substantial increase in the number of projects and the staff complement at the Secretariat. Consequently CROSQ made a request for a larger office space, which was granted. In July 2009, the Secretariat relocated to its current premises on the 2nd floor of Nicholas House in the heart of Bridgetown, Barbados.

CROSQ continues to develop and harmonise regional standards. A recent desk study reveals that there is a need for Member States to: 1) put in place legal and administrative measures so that Standards-related COTED / CROSQ decisions are binding; 2) draft appropriate legislation to give effect to CROSQ Standards; and 3) adopt harmonized regional standards as national standards.

Under a new project funded by Tradecom, a Metrology Officer was hired to coordinate the activities of CARIMET (Caribbean arm of the hemispheric Sistema Interamericana Metrologia (SIM)), a Technical Committee of CROSQ. The first-ever regional intercomparison on mass (supplementary) has been recently initiated. Plans are afoot to operationalise the Caribbean Reference Laboratories (CARLs), which will provide efficient and cost-effective international traceability of primary quantities (mass, volume, time & frequency) to the working standards at the national level.

Results from a survey on certification bodies and inspection bodies are currently being analysed in order to reduce intra-regional trade barriers through the use of harmonized and / or mutually-recognised testing and certification procedures. The development and use of a regional certification mark is also high on the CROSQ Agenda as a further step towards facilitating intra-regional trade.

Two National Accreditation Bodies (NABs), one each in Jamaica (Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation - JANAAC) and Trinidad & Tobago (Trinidad & Tobago Laboratory Services - TTLABS) are now preparing for international recognition. In countries without a NAB, National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs) are being established and trained to fill the need of an NAB and provide the necessary support. A regional cooperation is to be established via a coordination mechanism between the NABs, NAFPs and laboratories preparing for accreditation.

The recently-formed Regional Information Network (RIN) aims to harness global ICT developments and provide CROSQ with the high level of technological competence befitting a regional standards and quality organization.

Through support under the 9th EDF, CROSQ is increasing its operational effectiveness and capacity building within the Secretariat and its Member States, including purchasing of equipment, technical assistance to National Standards Bodies and facilitation of workshops.

Consultants hired under a Technical Assistance from PROINVEST (ACP facilitating agency) are helping CROSQ develop an Action Plan, based on which proposals will be prepared for funding by various international development partners.
Executive Director of the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS), Dr. Chatterpaul Ramcharran, appealed to all stakeholders on April 24 to take the necessary steps for ensuring quality measurements are provided on a sustainable basis.

He issued the appeal at a national conference on ‘The need for accurate measurement in the trade of bulk commodities’, hosted by GNBS in collaboration with the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ).

The one-day discussion took place at Regency Suites Hotel, Hadfield Street, Georgetown, with the aim of creating awareness among stakeholders of the need for accurate measurements.

“There is absolutely no doubt about it - having accurate measurement is vital for life and living,” Dr. Ramcharran emphasised. “To the manufacturers of scales, weights and measures, I would like you to ensure that you maintain the consistent quality of the devices that you produce, so they can provide quality measurements on a sustainable basis” he said, adding: “Please comply with the standards that have been established, as this is the blueprint that will enable you to achieve this objective.”

Dr. Ramcharran pointed to the necessity for consistency in the devices that are sold in the marketplace. He exhorted importers and distributors of the paraphernalia to consult with GNBS before placing orders, particularly if they are changing suppliers or importing new devices.

He also advised the users in public and private sector companies to make sure the accuracy of their devises are verified at least twice a year, indicating that not only GNBS provides this service, but other standards bodies throughout the region.

The importance of measurement was recognized and Dr. Ramcharran stressed that persons should take steps to get their equipment calibrated or verified in order to ensure not only consumer protection, but industrial development and local, regional and international trade.

According to the Executive Director, over the last five years, the need for accurate and reliable measurements has developed at a great pace, not only in the manufacturing sector and domains of national and international trade but also in the areas of human health and safety, protection of the environment, communications and in all fields of science and engineering. “Its importance is driven by the need to facilitate world trade and to the associate need to eliminate technical barriers. The broad need for internationally recognised, traceable, comparable measurement, as well as measurement standards and testing in all areas of society cannot be over emphasized.”

Accordingly, new networks of cooperation among international and inter-governmental organisations and the national and regional international standards bodies which have served to provide the necessary technical assistance, especially for developing countries.

Metrology, the science of measurement and its application, ensures accurate measurements for products which is fundamental for governments, enterprises and the population at large. Very often, the amounts and characteristics of a product are the result of a contract between the consumer and the manufacturer. Measurements contribute to this process and, thus, influence the quality of life for the population by protecting the consumer, helping to preserve the environment and contributing to the rational use of natural resources.

Repeating that accurate measurement is essential to support the control of products being manufactured and their impact on the well-being of the population, Dr. Ramcharran remarked that communities consume national and foreign products and accurate measurement is called upon to determine that they are in accordance with health and safety standards and specifications.

Dr. Ramcharran said the importance of accurate and reliable measurement is increasing due to rapid technological development and the emergence of an information society. “Consumers must make decisions every day, based on measurement results which affect their economic and personal well-being as well as the actions in efficiency of public authorities,” he stated.

He further pointed out that since manufacturers and sellers of most products control the measurement process used in trade, buyers are at a potential disadvantage regarding measurement results and their interpretation.

The role of governments in the process of measurement is of fundamental importance as this issue is a direct concern. Governments must provide the necessary laws and regulations, controlling measurement through market supervision and surveillance and developing the infrastructure and supporting accuracy of these measurements, through traceability.

Dr. Ramcharran maintained that it is the role of the national government to undertake all necessary activities to promote metrology, develop its infrastructure, support its research and protect persons and companies against the possible abuses related to measurements. These tasks must be organised in a comprehensive and a coherent policy for which a law on metrology structure is needed.

GNBS has established a National Metrology Programme which is currently involved in a range of activities including calibration and as Dr. Ramcharran indicated, “We are trying to build our capacity and training our technicians actively through CROSQ, as well.” This capacity building and infrastructural development includes the acquisition of necessary equipment which will be utilised in various laboratories in order to provide a testing and calibration service.

Other GNBS activities and initiatives include verification and a countrywide inspection campaign by weights and measure offices in each region, in an attempt to provide an active Weights and Measures Programme in the country.

- adapted from Guyana Chronicle
The CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) in their Plan of Action has included a commitment to creating safer and more efficient buildings. CROSQ hopes to achieve this objective through the establishment of a regional building standards project that will be implemented in each of the fifteen CARICOM member states. On 30 June 2009, the Belize Bureau of Standards (BBS) collaborated with CROSQ and launched the Belize National Technical Sub-Committee (NTSC) for building standards.

Mr. Jose E. Trejo, Director of BBS, spoke about the collapse of a school building in Haiti a few years ago in which hundreds died and many more were seriously injured. “The cause of it was suspected to be that of poor construction technique,” he said, and he does not want Belize to ever witness such a catastrophe.

Mr. Trejo said that there is great need for updated building codes in Belize. He wants these codes to “represent at the very least a minimum acceptable level of safety and serve as the basis for institutions and practitioners in the development of building standards.” He went on to add that with the rapid increase in population, there is additional need for houses, schools, hospitals and places of business. “Therefore, adequate building standards are needed more than ever.”

The Chief Executive Officer of CROSQ, Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez, gave a brief history of CROSQ and the status of regional operations in CARICOM countries. She stated that though standards development was being undertaken for many years, it was not until 2002 that formalise CROSQ, 14 member states of CARICOM signed an agreement at a CARICOM meeting held in Belize. Today, all 15 member states of CARICOM are members of CROSQ.

Dr. Lopez stressed that the need for regional integration is greater than ever. “The EU [European Union] has stated that they plan to trade with CARICOM as a single economic space with quality products coming to our markets out of Europe. We need to improve our standards to be internationally competitive,” she continued.

Belize’s standard for infrastructure is as important as any other services, and the members of the NTSC will be responsible for ensuring these standards provide safer buildings for the region as a whole, while considering the uniqueness of Belize. The members of the NTSC are representatives from the Central Building Authority, the Ministry of Works, the Belize Bureau of Standards, the Meteorology Department, the Belize National Fire Service, the Association of Professional Engineers, the Association of Professional Architects; and ITVET.
The Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) was launched by Jamaica’s Prime Minister, the Honourable Bruce Golding, on International Accreditation Day June 9, 2009 at the Terra Nova Hotel Kingston, Jamaica.

In addition to the Prime Minister, the launch saw the participation of several high level members of Government including the Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Mr. Karl Samuda, under whose portfolio the agency falls.

Only the second such agency in the entire Caribbean region, JANAAC is expected to play an important role in facilitating trade between Jamaica and its trading partners, including CARICOM, which was well represented at the launch.

Through the provision of accreditation services, JANAAC will enable Jamaica’s Conformity Assessment System to meet international standards and eliminate some Technical Barriers that have affected Jamaican manufacturers and exporters for many years.

In his keynote address at the launch, Prime Minister Golding underscored the importance of accreditation to trade and said that JANAAC will provide the confidence needed for Jamaica’s export sector.

“If world trade is to function effectively to support economic growth, we need these agreed standards and the mechanisms to certify and to assure our traders. We have to have a network of laboratories that are respected and that command confidence in what they say.” He said.

“Through the provision of accreditation services, JANAAC will enable local laboratories, to demonstrate that they meet international standards.”

Other influential stakeholders including the Laboratories Association of Jamaica, Jamaica Manufacturers Association, The Jamaica Exporters Association and the Ministry of Health also participated in the launch and echoed similar sentiments in support of accreditation as an important facilitator of trade.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of JANAAC, Marguerite Domville, said the laboratories in Jamaica have responded positively to the call for accreditation and notes that of the 83 presently in operation, 19 have already picked up applications from JANAAC’s offices.

“A survey was done among labs by the Laboratory Association of Jamaica and they found that a majority of labs involved in the study plan to get accredited within the next 12 months.” she said. Mrs. Domville added that “Labs have realized that it is important to their survival that they be accredited.”

Representatives of a number of Caribbean community (CARICOM) member states were also in attendance at the launch. Among them were Dr. Vyjayanthi Lopez, CEO of the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) based in Barbados, Ms. Giselle Guevara, Project Coordinator of the Caribbean Laboratory Accreditation Service Project of CROSQ, Dr. Gem Fletcher of the CARICOM Secretariat based in Guyana and Mrs. Violet Davis-Maurice, Manager of TTLABS, the National Accreditation Body of Trinidad & Tobago. Also present were other representatives from Bureaux of Standards from across the region.

The day’s activities also culminated in an Accreditation Conference entitled “Competence and Quality - a Guarantee of Excellence.” Hosted by JANAAC in collaboration with CROSQ, the conference was well attended with over 120 participants and saw a series of technical presentations from quality experts, examining the role of accreditation and the importance of competence in providing quality in testing services. The Keynote Address at the Conference was given by Mr. Ulf Hilner of the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB), Germany.

The formal launch of JANAAC and the Accreditation Conference were two of three main events executed by JANAAC in commemoration of International Accreditation Day. On June 8, the agency’s CEO, Mrs. Marguerite Domville, led a media tour of the island’s only internationally accredited laboratory at the Bureau of Standards.
Metrology Activities in Belize

CELEBRATING WORLD METROLOGY DAY
To commemorate the contributions of Metrology to trade, the Belize Bureau of Standards held an Open Day on Wednesday, May 20, at the Governor General Field in the capital City of Belmopan as part of the World Metrology Day celebrations.

According to the 2009 World Metrology Day Team, Metrology derives from the Metre Convention (Convention du Mètre), a treaty that provides the basis for the international agreement on units of measurement.

On 20 May 1875, representatives of 17 states signed the convention in Paris. Today, 52 States adhere to the treaty and many others enjoy its benefits. These benefits include having a single, coherent system of measurements, traceable to the International System of Units (SI). In Belize, as well as the rest of the world, celebrating World Metrology day represents an effort to promote the benefits of metrology to society.

The Open Day included exhibitions of products that provide the means of obtaining accurate measurements of everyday articles, on an accurate and precise scale. Students from various schools benefitted from the exhibitions, Power Point presentations and detailed explanation from members of the staff of the Bureau of Standards.

METROLOGY IN TRADE COMMODITIES
In the global trade market, sticking to a precise system of measurement can be crucial for a company to gain access to the supply and demand of produce. Sugar, one of Belize’s chief exports, is weighed in metric tons while oil, another newly exported commodity, is measured in barrels. In both cases quality and metrology determine the amount paid per bulk quantity.

The latter of the two factors was the spotlight of a one-day workshop held at the Biltmore in Belize on April 20.

During his address, Director of the Belize Bureau of Standards, Mr. Jose Trejo, emphasized the need for a legislative framework for metrology. Mr. Trejo indicated the importance of such a framework to enforce the accuracy of equipment for measuring, as well as for accuracy of quantities.

As aptly pointed out by Mr. Trejo, it is important for the sugar industry to ensure that “when cane is being delivered at the factory that the actual quantities that are being delivered are accurate”. He added, “These are the things that we want to ensure that in house, the actual weighing instruments, whether automatic or non automatic, are accurate.”

Present to address the subject of accurate measurement in the trade of bulk commodities was Mr. David May, Trading Standards Officer with the Hampshire County Council in England. Mr. May stressed that with increasing trade between countries, it is even more important to ensure accuracy. “It helps consumers because they are getting what they paid for and it’s helping legitimate business because they are trading at correct quantities,” he explained.

He added that due to the complexity of some of the products that are being measured, the seller does not always have an accurate indication of quantity and often times has to rely on the purchaser. “In order to get fairness the seller should have an idea of what they are selling and not have to rely on the purchaser’s declaration of quantity.”

The seminar was chaired by Dr. Michael Seepersaud, CROSQ / IDB-MIF Project Manager for the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ). Upon conclusion of the seminar, stakeholders were challenged to boost market competitiveness for traded products through the use of suitable measurement methods.

Caribbean Foreign Trade Opportunities and Challenges for Private Sector

The Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM), in cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank Multilateral Investment Fund (IDB/MIF), hosted a Workshop/Consultation with representatives of the Region’s Private Sector entitled “Caribbean Foreign Trade Opportunities and Challenges for the Private Sector: How to Move Forward” in Jamaica on 15 June 2009.

The Consultation coincided with the conclusion of the CRNM IDB/MIF Private Sector Outreach Programme which also received support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and operated for a period of four years. Under this programme, projects such as radio programs and training workshops or ‘boot-camps’ were undertaken with the aim of sensitizing the Caribbean private sector to the changing architecture of the international trade arena. The primary emphasis was to draw attention to the new opportunities in the global market place, especially those which have been opened up by the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the Members of the Caribbean Forum of the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States (CARIFORUM) and the European Community.

At the opening of the workshop, the Director of Technical Cooperation, Partnerships and Information of the CRNM, Mr. Trevor Boothe, pointed out, “While governments and agencies such as the CRNM negotiate the enabling framework for international trade, it is the private sector that conducts trade. For this reason, the highest priority has been accorded to working with the private sector in order to enhance their comprehension of changes occurring in international trade policies and by extension, the opportunities to improve their export capacities and revenue earning potentialities.”

The Consultation also provided a forum to discuss the way forward for further cooperation between international development partners, CARICOM, CRNM and the private sector.

- adapted from RNM Press Release
The Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) hosted a national workshop entitled “The Role of Standards and Caribbean Export’s Direct Assistance Scheme in Enhancing Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Competitiveness” on July 22 at the Guyana International Conference Centre, Lilienaal, East Coast Demerara, in collaboration with the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) and the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce.

Caribbean Export, established in January 1996 by an Inter-Governmental Agreement as the regional trade and investment promotion agency to the 15 Member States of CARIFORUM (CARICOM plus Dominican Republic), is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Member States from both the public and private sectors and is accountable to the CARIFORUM Council of Ministers. The agency’s head office is in Barbados, with a sub-regional office in the Dominican Republic, and its operations are financed by revenues generated from its services and contributions by Member States and donor funding agencies.

The main objective of Caribbean Export is to contribute to the gradual integration of CARIFORUM firms into the world economy and, by so doing, enhance regional economic growth. Its mission is to increase the competitiveness of Member States by providing quality trade and investment development and promotion services through effective programme execution and strategic partnerships.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- promote the Caribbean Export Direct Assistance Scheme and how SMEs can access funding to enhance their competitiveness through increasing exports or potential to export goods and services;
- explain the role of standards bureaus and examine the impact that international standards may have on the ability of firms to penetrate export markets; and
- promote the development and use of standards in CARIFORUM States, with a view to enhancing SME competitiveness.

Delivering the feature address, Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Mr. Manniram Prashad posted that local enterprises can realise sustainable growth and development and, simultaneously, combat the many challenges that may arise through implementation of standards and conformity assessment.

He commended the stakeholders on convening the forum and acknowledged that it has come at a troubling time in the financial sector, when key players around the world have turned on the searchlight to find ways of boosting trade, especially in the micro and small enterprises sector. Pointing out that small enterprises make up at least 95 per cent of the global business population, the Minister said they play an integral part in employment and contribute significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). He added that in Guyana, the relevance of small businesses is similar, making them extremely important to the economy.

“The fact that their products and services meet the criteria. The career that their products and services are of the necessary implemented systems, within their own organisations, to ensure that the products purchased are fit for the purpose and also allows them the possibility of seeking appropriate remedies, should what is sold be found not to meet the specified requirements. In the case of the manufacturers, it gives them the confidence that they have implemented systems, within their own organisations, to ensure that the products and services delivered meet the necessary criteria. The fact that their products and services meet the...
Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure

Continued from page 6

requirements of regional or international standards also gives them a competitive edge over those that do not,” the Minister asserted. With respect to regulators, it affords them the use of the conformity assessment infrastructure, as part of the process used to ensure that health and safety, as well as environmental conditions are being continuously met. “The regulator will often make conformity assessment obligatory when it involves health, safety and/or environmental issues. Without official assessment and approval, the regulator may prohibit the sale of products and services,” he cautioned.

Minister Prashad said that not only does conformity assessment provide confidence to consumers and purchasers but it also facilitates the free flow of goods and services between national boundaries. Accordingly, “Consumer confidence and international market access are both outcomes for which each and every business should strive.”

Minister Prashad agreed SMEs are facing new challenges today in the area of technological capabilities, lack of management personnel and competence, need for human resource development and management, strategic planning, funds for advertising and marketing and competitive positioning to benefit from new markets. “Yet, I want to encourage you to look positively to the future and capitalise on opportunities such as this workshop to start the process and find innovative ways to enable this sector to contribute to an ever increasing degree of national and regional competitiveness,” he exhorted the seminar participants. In the context of trade liberalisation and the challenges, he said the main hope for the survival of small businesses is through the implementation of standards.

Minister Prashad indicated he was very happy to see that GNBS is providing support in this area through its technical assistance programme and the services it offers in the field of metrology. Against that backdrop, he reassured that the GNBS vision is to establish a national conformity assessment system and, to this end, a committee has been set up. The Minister further added, “We need to urgently consider the principles that have been outlined for free trade in the various trade agreements and move to put in place the necessary infrastructure to achieve success.”

Executive Director of GNBS, Dr Chatterpaul Ramcharan, announced that the GNBS vision is to establish a national conformity assessment system and, to this end, a committee has been set up.

Director of Caribbean Export, Mr. Avalon Jagnandan, in his remarks, said that at the 14th CARIFORUM Council of Ministers Meeting held in July 2005, it was agreed to amend the ‘Agreement establishing Caribbean Export’ to include investment promotion. He indicated that the amendment transformed the agency into a regional trade development and investment promotion organisation for the CARIFORUM Member States.

Mr. Jagnandan further added that the aim of the agency is to be a catalyst for regional economic prosperity, through planned interventions on trade development and investment promotion. According to the Director, to support this quest in a dynamic business environment, Caribbean Export continues to review and enhance its key result areas and goals - fostering regional integration, enhancing competitiveness, investment promotion and building institutional capacity and strengthening networks.

IMPLEMENTING

Mr. Jagnandan indicated that Caribbean Export is currently implementing the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) project, entitled ‘Caribbean Trade and Private Sector Programme’, the objective of which is to strengthen the competitiveness of CARIFORUM firms and support their integration into the global environment. It is under this programme that Caribbean Export has decided to host a number of workshops designed to expose business persons to the importance of standards in achieving their export potential.

With the implementation of trade agreements, traditional barriers such as tariffs are becoming a thing of the past and overcoming technical barriers to trade, through the use of standards, is becoming an important feature of export competitiveness and sustainability,” Mr. Jagnandan posited. He informed the gathering that the agency’s work has focused on the implementation of projects targeting creative industries, health and wellness, information technology and communication (ITC), professional services and innovation. “The support for private sector is also clearly demonstrated by the Direct Assistance Grant Scheme which operates on a reimbursement basis.” To date, 231 applications have been received and 60 grants awarded and Mr. Jagnandan assured that Caribbean Export will continue its close collaboration with CROSQ, GNBS and the Government of Guyana to make sure that firms reach their maximum export potential.

Among other presentations were an overview of the Caribbean Export Direct Assistance Scheme by its Senior Grant Adviser, Mr. Kirk Brown, and of the Regional Standard Development Process by CROSQ/IDB-MIF Project Manager, Dr. Michael Seepersaud.

- adapted from Guyana Chronicle

Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure
Fostering Business Between China and the Caribbean

Several top officials from the private and public sectors in the region will join Dr. David C. Estwick, M. P., Minister of Economic Affairs, Empowerment, Innovation, Trade, Industry and Commerce, Barbados in making presentations at the upcoming China-CARIFORUM Dialogue scheduled for early August.

They include Mr. Russ Jones, Partner Tax, PricewaterhouseCoopers; Dr. Denny Lewis-Bynoe, Director of Economics Department, Caribbean Development Bank; Mr. Robert Gregory, President, Jamaica Trade Invest/JAMPRO; and Mr. Vincent Philbert, Executive Director, OECS Export Development Unit.

The China-Caribbean Business Dialogue, to be held in Barbados on Wednesday August 5 at the Hilton Barbados, will look at the impact of the global economic crisis, how to improve trade and business linkages between China and the Caribbean, and how to attract Chinese investment to the region.

A dozen officials and business persons from China are expected to attend the event, which is being hosted by the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) in partnership with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT).

Executive Director of Caribbean Export, Philip Williams, told the Caribbean Export Press Release that the initiative to hold the session came from the China Council and was in keeping with China’s status as one of the leading economies in the world. From Caribbean Export’s perspective, Mr. Williams said that the CARIFORUM region needed to rethink it trade alliances with the major countries in the world and China was one of them. He said it was the first time Caribbean Export had been invited to work on a project with China and he hoped it would lead to additional projects in the coming year.

The agency’s focus is on making business happen, he added, and he felt that while China had a lot to offer the region in terms of investment capital, the region also had something to offer China. For example, it was not only a gateway to North American and Latin America, but the region had highly educated people, and he hoped that some joint ventures might come out of the meetings.

“It all depends on how dynamic our business people are, but certainly there is a lot of potential there,” said Mr. Williams and the investment flows did not all have to be one-way. He added: “The fact that they are interested in our region should be something we should be pleased about. It is similar to their overtures to other developing countries and part of China’s recognition that it is now a major world power.”

- Caribbean Export Press Release

FROM CDERA to CDEMA

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) will formally become the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) on September 1, 2009.

This change brings to fruition months of planning and represents the concretization of an organizational transition and strategic shift in focus from disaster preparedness and response to comprehensive disaster management.

The primary evidence of the transition is reflected in the organization’s structure and mandate which has been widened to include the adoption of disaster loss reduction and mitigation policies and practices at the national and regional level and cooperative arrangements and mechanisms to facilitate the development of a culture of disaster loss reduction.

Apart from a shift in mandate the new agency’s governance structure will also be amended. The institution will be governed by a Council constituting the Heads of the Participating States, or their designate, but will be strengthened through the establishment of a Management Committee of Council (MCC). The technical platform of the agency will be strengthened through the involvement of specialized Regional Institutions in the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), who will provide diversified expertise in a variety of areas related to the science and policy of disaster management.

The Agency will now function with an increased membership of eighteen (18) Participating States to include Haiti and Suriname who have recently signed on to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency Agreement.

The organization has outlined a series of activities which will facilitate greater participation of its stakeholders in shaping coordinated strategic response to the reduction of disaster related losses in the region. Although acknowledged as a continuation of a process which commenced with the adoption of the Enhanced Comprehensive Disaster Management Strategy, the Agency will continue to be governed by its mission and vision which emphasizes the need for an organization which is a “leading, innovative centre of excellence, dedicated to building linkages for the promotion of a culture of reducing disaster losses in the region.”

This view was emphasized by Mr. Jeremy Collymore, the Agency’s Executive Director, who sees the establishment of CDEMA to be a clear indication that Participating States are ready to embrace policy, systems and programmes that are appropriate for the rapidly changing risks to their development arising from the changing magnitude, frequency and costs of hazard impacts, the onset of climate change and other trans-boundary threats like pandemics. He urged the agency’s staff “to recognize that the change in name is part of a wider process to ensure that we are more responsive to a very discerning community that wants to be fully engaged in the risk reduction dialogue and actions.”

- CDEMA Press Release
OECS trade experts will meet in Dominica during September to discuss tariff liberalization. The two day meeting scheduled for September 12 and 13 hopes to harmonize tariff liberalization offers that member states will be making in the CARIFORUM-EU negotiations. CARIFORUM-EU EPA negotiations are aimed at the drafting of a free trade agreement which will redefine the trading regime between the European Union (EU) and the CARIFORUM countries.

The intention of such an agreement is to remove barriers to trade between the parties. These barriers can take the form of tariffs imposed on imported items at the ports or quotas among other measures. Consequently trade officials from each OECS member state will discuss their proposed lists of products imported from the EU that they wish to exclude from tariff liberalization and those to be subject to phased tariff reductions.

Head of the Trade Policy Unit at the OECS Secretariat, Virginia Paul, explains that this meeting is extremely important. She says it provides the opportunity for the OECS to discuss national offers, identify areas where members need help in concluding their offers and then finalize the OECS offer for market access in goods, with a view to arriving at a harmonized list of products to be excluded from tariff liberalization and items to be phased overtime.

According to Ms. Paul, arriving at consensus on these issues has been very challenging, especially in the context of the fast approaching year end deadline for finalizing matters relating to the EPA. However, she adds, it is important for the sub region to devise and consolidate a common OECS approach on these trade matters which will further inform its position in the broader CARICOM and CARIFORUM settings. The finalized OECD market access offer will be discussed further and incorporated into the Meeting of CARIFORUM Senior Officials on EPA Negotiations scheduled for September 19 - 20.

The OECD Trade Policy Unit was established at the OECD Secretariat in 2003 to assist Member States to implement trade policies and negotiate trade rules and arrangements by providing technical advice, information, advocacy and training. A major objective of the Unit is to increase understanding and awareness of trade policy issues in the OECD.

Technical support for the two day meeting will be provided by the Hub and Spokes Project which is managed by the Commonwealth Secretariat within the Caribbean. The project is funded by the EU. It is designed to promote the effective participation of African and Caribbean states in international trade negotiations and re-enforce their capacity to formulate and implement trade policies consistent with their overall development strategies.

Note: The fifteen member CARIFORUM states comprise the independent CARICOM member states and the Dominican Republic.

- adapted from OECS website

OECS to Assist Dominica with Implementation of CSME

The OECS Trade Policy Unit will be part of a delegation to Dominica in September to discuss the harmonization and standardization of the country’s administrative practices and procedures to ensure that they are compliant with the arrangements under the CSME.

The mission comprises representatives of the CSME Unit and CARICAD which will meet with the National Coordinating Committee in Dominica under the auspices of the CIDA funded CSME Trade and Competitiveness Project. This Project seeks to streamline procedures and facilitate increased participation of stakeholders in the implementation of the CSME.

The OECS Secretariat is an implementing partner for the Project and has responsibility for activities in the OECS Member States. During the mission the main report that will be discussed is “The harmonization and Standardisation of Administrative Rules and Procedures”. The Committee’s comments will be used to finalise the report.

Meanwhile, trade policy implementation in the OECD continues to get support from the Hubs and Spokes project. This project, set up in 2005, promotes the effective participation of OECD Member States in international trade negotiations (such as the WTO) and re-enforces their capacity to formulate and implement trade policies consistent with their overall development strategies.

The Project has finalized its Work Programme and Budget for July – December 2009. The process involved consultations with the Director of the Economic Affairs Division of the Secretariat, Mr. Randy Cato, and the Trade Policy and Regional Integration Units to ensure that the Project’s Work Programme and Budget reflect and provide for the following activities which are of priority interest to the Secretariat in its delivery of support to the Member States:

• OECS Economic Union – Development of a Framework for Establishment of an OECS regime for free circulation of goods;
• Trade Policy Implementation in relation to the a) CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and b) CSME;
• Trade Negotiations in relation to the WTO and the Impending CARICOM-Canada negotiations.

Preliminary work continues with respect to profiling and analysing OECD-Canada trade, in preparation for the CARICOM-Canada Trade Negotiations.

- adapted from OECS website
The Trade Policy and Export Development Units of the OECS Secretariat collaborated with the Coalition of Service Industries in Dominica and St. Kitts/Nevis and the Ministries of Trade in each country to convene one-day workshops on trade in services which were delivered under the theme “Target New Markets: A Strategic Approach to Exporting Services”.

The objective of the workshop is to offer specialized training to professional service exports and service firms with expert potential to modern techniques and strategies for successful exporting and provide them with skills to enter new markets whilst increasing the awareness of potential exporters to market opportunities. The workshop in Dominica was held on April 28 and the one in St. Kitts/Nevis on April 30. The Export Development Unit provided financing for the workshops.

Participants were extremely satisfied with the information that they received and recommended that the Coalition of Service Industries convene similar activities in the future. Approximately 55 people attended the workshop in Dominica and 30 people attended the one in St. Kitts/Nevis.

- OECS Trade Update (April 2009)

In the future, the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) will be referred to as the Office of Trade Negotiations (OTN). The name change was one of a number of decisions taken at the 30th Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) held 2-4 July 2009 in Guyana. Implementation matters have arisen subsequent to a broader decision the Heads adopted earlier this year to reform the governance of the CRNM.

During its Twentieth Inter-Sessional Meeting held 12-13 March 2009 in Belize, the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM deliberated CRNM’s governance and took a decision to “incorporate the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) into the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat as a Specialised Department - recognizing and providing for the special nature of its role and functions.

The CRNM, as the Office of Trade Negotiations of the CARICOM Secretariat, will report only to the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) and by extension, to the Heads of Government through the Secretary General of the CARICOM Secretariat. Until now, the CRNM reported directly to the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee (PMSC) on External Negotiations, which was chaired by the Prime Minister of Jamaica. It also reported to the COTED but the PMSC also served as a quick consult mechanism whenever negotiations reached a deadlock and an urgent decision was needed by the Region. No explicit mechanism has been identified to replace this body.

In addition, the mandate of the former CRNM has been extended to include responsibility for all external trade negotiations on behalf of the Community. During the 30th Meeting, the Heads also decided that in light of the Community’s capacity constraints, with respect to the scheduling of future trade negotiations, priority will be placed on negotiations with Canada. It is anticipated that thereafter, the Region will focus on engaging MERCOSUR – a regional common market encompassing Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. The immediate aim of this engagement will be to conclude functional cooperation arrangements, which could be a precursory step towards negotiating a trade agreement with MERCOSUR. The Heads during the Meeting, also agreed to support bilateral arrangements between Trinidad and Tobago and Brazil, provided that these arrangements were not at variance to Trinidad and Tobago’s Community obligations under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

At the opening of the 27th Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) on 14 May in Providence, Guyana, the Secretary-General said that the Secretariat was working to ensure a smooth transition with assistance from the highest levels of the Community.

Noting the critical nature of trade negotiations with Third States to the development of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the Secretary-General gave the assurance that the skills “garnered and honed over the years by our negotiators in multilateral and bilateral fora, will in large measure continue to be utilized in the best interests of the Community.”

The OTN will be located in Barbados. However, it will continue to have a presence in Jamaica, Guyana and Geneva. A presence in Canada established to provide support to CARICOM during the upcoming negotiations with Canada will also be maintained until that exercise is completed. The presence in Brussels and Trinidad and Tobago will be discontinued. However, the Trinidad and Tobago operation established to provide support and advice to the OECS, Haiti and Belize is to be moved to the OECS Secretariat in St. Lucia. An officer had previously been located in the OECS Secretariat but this arrangement was terminated in 2007.

It is anticipated that the new Director General designate, Ambassador Gail Mathurin, whose appointment was confirmed during the 30th Meeting of Conference of Heads, will assume the helm in September this year. She replaces Ambassador Henry Gill who resigned on June 30th 2009. In the interim the officer-in-charge of the department is the Deputy Senior Director, Mr. Carl B. Greenidge.

- adapted from CARICOM Press Release
Promoting Regional Quality Infrastructure

A showcase of Vincentian culture during the Opening Ceremony of the Fourteenth Council Meeting in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Mr. Jens Koch giving a presentation during a planning workshop held in conjunction with the Fourteenth Council meeting in St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Karlene Lewis of TTBS giving a presentation during a conference held as part of International Accreditation Day Celebration

Attendees of the International Accreditation Day Conference in Jamaica

Presentation given during the Launch of JANAAC, Jamaica
## 2009 Calendar of Events (July – December)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2-5</td>
<td>Thirtieth Meeting of Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 6-10</td>
<td>Caribbean Agro Economic Society 28th West Indies Agricultural Economics Conference</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 13-14</td>
<td>Conference on Intellectual Property and Global Challenges</td>
<td>Geneva</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 15-16</td>
<td>OECS Development Conference</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
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<td>July 19</td>
<td>CARICOM Day</td>
<td>Global</td>
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<td>July 21-22</td>
<td>OECS Ministers of Trade</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 29-30</td>
<td>Seventh Meeting of the Caribbean Fisheries Forum</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 4-6</td>
<td>ISO Workshop on Conformity Assessment</td>
<td>St. Lucia</td>
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<td>August 5</td>
<td>China-Caribbean Business Dialogue</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 17-20</td>
<td>Eighth Meeting of Editorial Committee of CROSQ</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
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<td>August 31 - September 4</td>
<td>IAAC General Assembly</td>
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<td>September 4</td>
<td>First Meeting of CROSQ Regional Information Network Committee</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<td>September 14-18</td>
<td>Regional Workshop on WTO Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights negotiations and activities</td>
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<td>September 15</td>
<td>National Quality Infrastructure Workshop</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 24-29</td>
<td>Guyana Trade and Investment Exposition (GuyExpo 2009)</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
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<td>September 28-29</td>
<td>Fifteenth Meeting of the Technical Management Committee of CROSQ</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 28-October 2</td>
<td>Fifteenth Meeting of the Council and Fifth Annual General Meeting of CROSQ</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>World Standards Day</td>
<td>Global</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 13-15</td>
<td>ISO Workshop on The role of Standards in Economic Development and Trade</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>October 25-30</td>
<td>SIM General Assembly</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>IAAC CROSQ/ DIGENOR Workshop for Medical Labs (ISO 15189)</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
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<td>November 27-29</td>
<td>Commonwealth Heads of Government</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 30-December 4</td>
<td>Mass Attachment Metrology Training</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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## CROSQ’S MISSION

The promotion and development of standards and standards related activities to facilitate international competitiveness and the sustainable production of goods and services within the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) for the enhancement of social and economic development.

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