Association of Caribbean States (ACS)

<u>SUMMARY REPORT</u>

Trade Directorate Meetings with the UNCTAD's Inter-regional Coordinator

For E-Regulations

Introduction

The Trade Directorate in following the approved 2011-2013 work programme held discussions with the official within the United Nations Centre for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in charge of E-Regulations, to discuss the E-Regulations Programme and structure plans for presentation and collaboration on e-regulations, in order to have the knowledge of this programme transferred to Member States.

The UNCTAD E-regulations Programme was designed to make administrative procedures transparent, swift and efficient in order to establish an enabling environment for private sector development and to strengthen good governance and the rule of law.

UNCTAD has conceived a web-based e-Government system to help developing countries and countries in transition work towards business facilitation through transparency, simplification and automation of rules and procedures relating to enterprise creation and operation. This system can contribute to greater transparency and efficiency in the public service, improved governance and cost reductions.

Outcomes

During this meeting the Trade Directorate was introduced to the E-regulations system and given a virtual tour of the operation of the system. The objectives, benefits, and importance of the system were highlighted.

It was noted that many countries are faced with the challenges of bureaucratic red tape, bottlenecks and cumbersome and time consuming procedures. This is most evident the number of steps that must potential investors and business owners must go through.

The UNCTAD official indicated that the programme also offers recommendations towards reducing the number of steps that may be required to complete

processes. The Trade Directorate was taken through the creation of a business process within the e-regulations system of ACS member states presently involved in the programme (El Salvador, Guatemala and Costa Rica.)

Also reviewed was the Latin America E-regulations website – parent site of all the national e-regulations programmes currently in place; this tool facilitates comparison of countries' steps which enables potential investors to make determinations on the most investor friendly climate amongst countries.

At present six (6) member countries of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) are at varying stages of implementation of the e-regulations system (Columbia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala Nicaragua and Panama) UNCTAD has also received request from a number of CARICOM country members of the ACS, however this process has not advanced passed the request stage.

Discussions were held regarding collaboration between the ACS and UNCTAD. The discussion explored:

- Presentation by UNCTAD of E-regulations Programme at the next SCT meeting (XXVII SCT)

- Hosting a workshop to raise awareness and knowledge on E-regulations amongst Members

- Other future collaborative events with UNCTAD on E-regulations.

The E Regulations system proves a most effective tool, and ACS member States should be encouraged to incorporate the use of this system in their transparency function. Among the most important highlights of this programme are:

- The achieving of more transparent procedures.

- Recommendations towards simplification of regulations and administrative rules.

- The creation of an investment climate, which supports the creation of new opportunities and ease of the trade facilitation and doing business process.