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# EU support to facilitate participation of CARIFORUM Civil Society in the regional development and integration process: Challenges to CARIFORUM labour, private sector and employers to fulfil their EPA obligations

2 Feb 2015 - 1 Feb 2018

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Enhanced technical and organizational capacity of the regional organizations of employers and workers to participate meaningfully in harmonization of labour laws and practices to support the free movement of a skilled and competitive workforce, the development of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises across the region, and the promotion of the Caribbean Single Market intra- and extra-regional trade and development.

Processes and programmes in place to assist the regional and national organizations of employers and workers in building and maintaining institutional capacity required to promote and implement internationally recognized core labour standards according to Article 191 of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), and the Decent Work Agenda.

Mechanisms established to facilitate the promotion of and participation in dialogue by CEC and CCL within the CARIFORUM-EC Consultative Committee, and to enable them to fulfil their roles in the implementation and governance of the EPA, including monitoring its effect as described in the Social Aspects Chapter.

## OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVE

Employers and workers through their national and regional organizations engage effectively in social dialogue processes to contribute to the design and implementation of social and economic development policies for Caribbean regional integration and to drive the monitoring process of the social aspects of the CARIFORUM-European Community Economic Partnership Agreement.

The Programme was developed based on the findings of the Landell-Mills Report (2010) and the needs identified with the elected leaders of the CEC and CCL. Action to be undertaken under this project is in line with those listed in the Social Aspects Chapter of the EPA, namely:

- Exchange of information, the formulation and strengthening of social and labour legislation in line with international labour standards and on measures aimed at promoting the Decent Work Agenda;
- Strengthening mechanisms for social dialogue, including consultations on the review of labour legislation;
- Adhering to labour legislation and regulations that would reduce the informal economy and increase opportunities for decent jobs;

## ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The EPA has been called a trade partnership for sustainable development because it is a trade agreement with development components. Development Cooperation takes two forms financial and non-financial. The financial commitment is contained in a Joint Declaration on Development Cooperation, and in Article 8 of the Agreement, the development cooperation priorities are set out. Among these listed areas of priority are:

- building human, legal and institutional capacity in the CARIFORUM States so as to facilitate their ability to comply with the commitments set out in the EPA;
- promoting private sector and enterprise development in particular small economic operators; and
- enhancing the technological and research capabilities of the CARIFORUM States to develop and comply with internationally-recognized technical standards as well as internationally-recognized labour and environmental standards.

- Contributing to the implementation of training programmes aimed at enhancing skills development to match labour market requirements and ensuring that the corresponding labour market information system is in place to support employment and labour market policies;
- Reinforcing the capacity of workers and employers to participate fully in tripartite bodies to enhance productivity and trade policies in line with the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FPRW), 1998; and
- Conducting educational and awareness-raising programmes in areas such as health and safety, workers' and employers' rights and responsibilities, and labour market adjustment policies.

## SOME EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Greater recognition and influence of CEC and CCL at CARICOM and across the region;
- Vibrant and effective social dialogue mechanisms at the national and regional levels;
- Alignment of education outcomes with the needs of the labour market;
- Employers' Organizations and trade unions participate in the implementation, governance and monitoring of the effects of the EPA;
- CCL and CEC able to provide information, analysis and well-researched policy positions building on national situations and data; and
- Strengthened capacities of CEC, CCL and their respective affiliates within CARIFORUM States.

## INTENDED BENEFICIARIES

Caribbean Congress of Labour, Caribbean Employers' Confederation and their affiliates in the countries of CARIFORUM.

## SOME ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

- CARICOM agrees to establish Regional Social Dialogue Mechanism proposed by CEC and CCL;
- CCL and CEC sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Legislative Agenda;
- Brussels Study Tour on EU social dialogue mechanisms;
- 15 National Meetings of Employers' and Workers' Organizations in CARIFORUM States to set policy and training agendas;
- Websites and social media channels developed to increase the flow of information among affiliates and the public; and
- Systematic region-wide training programmes for employers' organizations and trade unions.

## FUNDING

EU: €1,715,000 (approx. US\$2.06 million)  
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