

**Draft Speech for Demand Reduction Training Workshop and
Meeting of Caribbean National Observatories on Drugs
10 to 14 September 2007**

“EU support and Strategy for the Caribbean”

11:45 to 12:00

On Wednesday 12 September 2007

**Distinguished Organisers, Speakers and Participants of this
Demand Reduction Training Workshop and Meeting of Caribbean
National Observatories on Drugs**

First of all, I would like to say that I am pleased to be here on behalf of the European Commission and I would like to thank the Carciom Secretariat for inviting the European Commission to participate in this workshop.

The External policy and development strategy of the European Commission is ultimately based on the belief that there is shared responsibility as well as shared benefit in tackling inequalities and problems around the world.

The problem linked to illegal drug supply and demand is a good example of this, since all parties in the drug chain, from production to consumption, are, in one way or another, responsible for the existence of the problem and are also adversely affected by it.

Trafficking in drugs is recognised as one of the biggest challenges to national security in the Caribbean. Moreover, transnational crime, especially drug trafficking, has showed unparalleled growth over the last decades.

These problems have been recognised by the European Commission and in response the Commission has supported and still supports measures to reduce drug supply and demand in the region.

In the following, I will briefly out-line what has been achieved in the past, then, I will focus on on-going projects funded by the European Commission in the region and to finish off, I will make a brief reflection about future co-operation.

Reducing drug supply and demand is a complex matter, the causes, damages and side-effects all being inter-linked to various aspects of society. I am sure you all agree that there is not one “miracle” solution to the problems linked to drugs, but the solution rather lies in co-ordinated measures on a multitude of fronts. This approach is also reflected in the way the European Commission has chosen to support in the fight against illegal drugs in the region.

European funds, as far as the Caribbean region is concerned, are delivered in mainly two ways; firstly, and most importantly, through the European Development Fund (commonly called the EDF). The co-operation works in five-year cycles and for each five-year cycle the European Commission and the Caribbean Region agrees on a Regional Strategy Paper and a Regional Indicative Programme that sets the frame for development projects to be funded by the European Commission. Secondly, projects are funded through specific budget lines.

Whereas the EDF funds are normally disbursed to governments or regional governmental organisations, the budget lines are often earmarked for NGOs or international organisations.

Under the 8th EDF, the five-year programming cycle that ran from 1996 to 2001, the European Commission was the biggest contributor to the Barbados Plan of Action, committing 20 M€ of a total budget of 35 M€ to it.

In the field of drugs, there were two significant projects under the 8th EDF, amounting to 5.3 M€. The Caribbean Anti-Money Laundering Programme that focused on legal and judicial development and the establishment of an enforcement agency. And a Drug Abuse Programme implemented by CAREC. The Drug Abuse Programme’s main focus was to establish a sound database and an early warning system to assist national and regional policy makers in demand reduction.

Parallel to these two projects, were a multitude of budget line funded projects such as a “Law enforcement training project (1 M€),

Treatment and Rehabilitation Project (0.7 M€), Forensic laboratories upgrading project (0.5 M€) and a project on the Caribbean Law Enforcement Council's Regional Clearance System (0.6 M€).

The presently on-going projects, under the 9th EDF – that is for the five-year cycle from 2001 to 2007, follows in the steps of the Barbados Plan of Action and the 8th EDF.

The overall aim of the Regional Strategy Paper of the 9th EDF, is the beneficial integration of the Caribbean region into the world economy through a global repositioning. The intensification of regional integration has been highlighted as the focal sector.

And indeed, the Contribution Agreement on the Caribbean Integration Support Programme, signed in January this year, between Cariforum (that is Caricom plus the Dominican Republic) and the European Commission mainly focuses on the realisation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Out of the 40.5 M€ allocated under this Contribution Agreement, 2 M€ are earmarked for drug supply and demand reduction.

The drug component of the agreement focuses on developing and implementing regionally already rooted strategies on supply and demand reduction. It is divided into three main parts;

The first part amounts to 800,000 € and refers to the Drug Demand Reduction component. It is administered from the Caricom secretariat in Guyana and is implemented by the body known as the Regional Technical Advisory Body. The activities focus on developing training material and, furthermore, on training of various groups of people involved in the drug demand reduction work such as directors and senior officials of Drug Councils, mental health officers, primary health care practitioners, community nurses and representatives from NGOs.

The first year's work plan, that was signed a few months ago in April this year, aims at having 15 demand reduction practitioners trained and 3 demand reduction trainers trained. The work plan also foresees one drug demand workshop.

The second element of the drug component, with a budget of 400,000 €, deals with supply reduction and capacity building of law enforcement officers.

The aim is to support the Regional Drug Training Centres in Jamaica, Barbados and Martinique in helping law enforcement officers improve their managerial skills, investigative skills, forensic skills, awareness and understanding of human rights. Similarly to the drug demand reduction element, the first year's work plan aims at training 15 officers and 3 trainers.

The third part, amounting to 800,000 € of the drug component concerns institutional support to the Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, known as IMPACS, in its role to inform policy development.

The first year will be governed by a so called Programme Estimate that we hope will be operational in October this year. It will strengthen the core capacity of the Agency by recruiting two programme officers and two support staff. Moreover, the Agency will conduct regional assessments to determine the status of implementation of action regarding illegal drugs and participate in seminars on policy formulation. The project also aims at developing a best practice manual and to identify themes for monthly drug intelligence reports and to start analysing the region's data.

The current projects funded by the European Commission in the area of drug supply and demand reduction are all in their early phases, they build upon the achievements from earlier projects and are intended to strengthen and improve regional co-operation and co-ordination even further.

Worth mentioning is also the European Union and the Latin American and Caribbean Countries, the so-called EU-LAC Co-ordination and Co-operation Mechanism on Drugs that is based on the principles of shared responsibility. In 1999, the Mechanism endorsed the Panama Action Plan that promotes intra-regional and inter-regional co-operation and co-ordination. In May this year, the Mechanism approved the Port of Spain Declaration which is yet another step towards sharing experiences and strengthening the co-operation.

Turning to future co-operation, Cariforum and the European Commission are currently negotiating the frame for the 10th EDF, the coming five-year cycle that will run from 2008 to 2013.

Like under the 9th EDF, 'Regional Integration and Cooperation' is likely to become the focal sector of the co-operation between the European Commission and Cariforum.

The non-focal sector is most likely to, anew, pin-point the fight against illegal drugs as an area of concern and the amount allocated is likely to slightly increase.

The 10th EDF is expected to continue to work on the existing mechanisms for fighting drug addiction, drug trafficking, money-laundering and violent crime as to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for economic and social development within the region.

To conclude, it can be noted that other donors, such as the individual member-states of the European Union, like the UK, France and the Netherlands, as well as the US have focused more on the drug supply reduction. During the 8th EDF, the then existing European Commission Drug Control Officer stated that the European Commission was, more or less, the only donor of demand reduction projects. And indeed, the European Commission remains as a central donor in this respect.

Overall, the European Commission is an important donor in the region and will continue to be so. Likewise, the European Commission will remain committed in the area of illegal drugs.

There is a general trend towards a more capacity-building orientated support with the aim to assist the region in the building of a lasting, effective and co-ordinated system that will successfully reduce, and perhaps one day even erase, supply and demand for illegal drugs.

Thank you very much for your attention