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EU reaffirms its commitment to Jamaica and the Caribbean ahead of Regional Summit

Jamaica will be at the center stage of international talks this month as a delegation from the island joins high level representatives of the other 59 members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union (EU) in Santiago de Chile. These discussions will build on six previous European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC) Summit which have been held every two years since 1999.

The central theme of this first CELAC-EU Summit, which will be held in the Chilean capital between January 25 and 26, will be: **“Alliance for Sustainable Development: Promoting Social and Environmental Quality Investments”**. The objective of the summit is the development of a common agenda among the countries. This will allow for a deepening of commercial and investment relations and the development of a strategic alliance to promote the sustainable development of the regions' countries and their people.

During the Summit, the leaders are expected to adopt a political Declaration and to agree on the strengthening of the action plan for bi-regional cooperation adopted in the previous Summit held in Madrid in 2010, which identifies instruments and activities in the fields of:

- Science, research, innovation and technology;
- Sustainable development; environment; climate change; biodiversity; energy;
- Regional integration and interconnectivity to promote social inclusion and cohesion;
- Migration;
- Education and employment to promote social inclusion and cohesion;
- The world drug problem

The EU will also use the Summit to re-affirm its support to both regions. President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy and the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso in a joint statement issued earlier declared *"The European Union remains strongly committed to supporting economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The region's impressive economic progress means that with some of its more dynamic economies, we will be discussing new forms of cooperation to replace the donor-beneficiary relationships of the past."*

Commenting on the Summit, Head of the European Union Delegation to Jamaica, Ambassador Paola Amadei described the event as "timely and critical", pointing out that *"at a time when Jamaica, the EU and many other countries around the World are facing serious economic challenges, the summit presents a unique opportunity to discuss and devise together a way out of the crisis, a strategy that can reconcile economic growth, social protection and sustainable development."* She pointed out that the summit will also provide an opportunity for further discussions on the implementation of the Joint Caribbean -EU partnership strategy finalized last year. *"This strategy aims to develop a new dimension to the relationship between the Caribbean and the EU allowing the Caribbean and EU nations to deepen dialogue and structure their cooperation in order to address together the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century."*

A High Level EU-CARIFORUM Meeting will also take place at the margin of the Summit.

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