



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Port of Spain, 25 February 2014

EU Supports Launching of the 2014 UN International Year of Small Islands Development States (SIDS)

The International Year of Small Island Development States (SIDS) was officially launched on 24 February 2014. The European Union acknowledges that SIDS face common challenges and experience specific vulnerabilities across the economic, social and environmental dimensions. They are all greatly affected by climate change and confronted with rising sea levels, and face frequent natural and man-made disasters.

There are twenty-three (23) SIDS in the Caribbean Region. The EU and EU member states are the largest donors of grant aid to the region and a major trade and cultural partner. As one example of collaboration, SIDS currently benefit from EU support provided through Sustainable Fisheries Agreements, as well as promoting sustainable fisheries management and development. The EU maintains six (6) Delegations in the Caribbean. In 2013 an overall envelope of 1 billion euro was announced in support to the region from the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) from 2014 - 2020.

The European Union and its member states have a long standing concern for the challenges and conditions faced by SIDS. The EU and EU members have actively contributed to the elaboration and to the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPoA) and of the Mauritius Strategy of Implementation (MSI). The EU and EU MS see SIDS as natural, equal partners on critical global issues, which by definition defy borders. On many of these issues the SIDS group and the EU and EU member states share common opinions.

The EU and EU member states intend to continue existing efforts and build on them, especially for the preparation and negotiation of the outcomes from the Third International Conference on SIDS to be held in Apia, Samoa, in September 2014. Indeed, the European Union seeks to enhance the cooperation with the SIDS; strengthen existing partnerships and developing new ones. Future cooperation will also include strengthening of ties with the Outermost Regions of the EU and with EU Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) that share common characteristics and challenges with the SIDS.

At a global level, the EU and EU member states will also seek to enhance cooperation on joint research, building on existing areas of Information Society Technologies and Information and Communication Technology networks and partnerships, e-Science, biodiversity, oceans, climate change, health, and natural disasters, as well as the development of regional networks on science, technology and innovation.