



**CENTRE FOR CO-OPERATION WITH NON-MEMBERS
DIRECTORATE FOR FINANCIAL, FISCAL AND ENTERPRISE AFFAIRS**

PRESS RELEASE

OECD and Caribbean and Latin American governments meet to discuss promoting foreign direct investment in the region, Curaçao, 5-6 April 2001

The OECD and the Government of the Netherlands Antilles are co-organising a Conference on Foreign Direct Investment in the Caribbean Basin and Latin America on 5-6th of April. This conference is a continuation of the intensive dialogue the OECD has engaged in with Latin American countries since 1995 on investment issues. Previous conferences of this kind were held in Lima, Peru, in December 1998 and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in April 2000.

Over 50 participants, including high-level officials, from OECD and Latin American and Caribbean countries, representatives of CARICOM, other international organisations and the private sector will attend the conference. The mix of participants is expected to provide an opportunity for the exchange of diverse opinions and experiences. As well as presentations on recent investment trends and policy developments, the conference will present case study experience from countries and investor companies.

Mrs. Susanne Camelia-Römer, Deputy Prime Minister of the Netherlands Antilles, and the OECD will inaugurate the conference. A keynote speech, by Mr. G.M. de Vriers, State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands will open the Friday sessions. Concluding remarks will be given by Ms. Sally Shelton-Colby, Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD, on the 6th of April and will be followed by a press conference.

The conference will build on the initiatives developed during the conference held in Santo Domingo last year and provide a venue for continued policy dialogue among the Caribbean countries and the OECD in search of investment strategies that promote economically and socially sustainable development in the region. The conference will also launch the Caribbean Rim Investment Initiatives, a three-year programme to explore various policy issues to improve the investment climate in the region.

In recent years countries in the Caribbean Basin, recognising the benefits of FDI and the importance of creating a favourable environment for private investors, have made significant steps towards liberalisation and regulatory reform. Some of these initiatives include the granting of national treatment to foreign direct investors in an increased number of industries and the elimination of most restrictions on capital and profit remittances. The conference will seek to chart key policy issues for countries in the region and identify actions necessary to further improve the investment climate and to maximise the inflows and derived benefits of FDI over the coming years. The conference is timely in addressing these issues when the region is committed to an irreversible trend of liberalisation and is engaged in an intensive discussion for regional integration.

As a building block of the Caribbean Rim Investment Initiative, the conference will provide an opportunity to assess the comparative advantages of countries in the region to attract FDI. The introduction of a liberalised investment regime is only a beginning, and the creation of a favourable investment climate through institutional development is a key element in attracting sustained flows of FDI and maximising their benefits to local economies. Conference participants will discuss best practices for creating a favourable investment climate, including the institutional and policy frameworks for FDI, and the role of promotion agencies in attracting investment. Adoption of appropriate governance structures (both public and private), transparent legal enforcement mechanisms, infrastructure and human resource development, and fair and competitive practices are pressing issues for the Caribbean countries.

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