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## ITC supports new Caribbean Aid for Trade strategy, offers support for implementation

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(Port au Prince/Geneva) The International Trade Centre (ITC) welcomes the new Regional Aid for Trade Strategy of the Caribbean Community ([CARICOM](#)) and will support the 15-member group in its implementation, said [Friedrich von Kirchbach](#), ITC's Director of Country Programmes, who will represent ITC at the launch of the Strategy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on 11 June.

Mr. von Kirchbach will participate in a panel discussion on the key elements of the strategy at the one-day event, entitled, 'Turning market access into market presence'.

'The countries of the region understand very well that export diversification is their best bet to accelerate economic growth,' Mr. von Kirchbach said. 'ITC has considerable experience in the region and beyond in assisting with the implementation of strategies, turning ideas into concrete projects on the ground, delivering long-lasting, sustainable growth.'

The economic performance of most of the countries in the region has been lacklustre, further exacerbated by the sharp decrease in tourism revenues following the 2008 financial crisis. The countries of the region have access to international markets, thanks to multilateral, regional and bilateral trade agreements, and the strategy identifies the means through which this market access can be converted into market presence for the region's exporters. The strategy is a tool to create consensus among CARICOM Member States on priorities for ensuring a growing and more diversified regional economy. It presents a coherent approach to resource mobilization that outlines to donors, investors and international development partners how Member States intend to utilize resources.

The next step of the strategy is to identify non-traditional sectors with high export potential. The private sector must play a role in the identification of these priority sectors and the creation of export strategies at both the regional and national levels, Mr. von Kirchbach said. 'The goals set out in the new strategy cannot be achieved without engagement and active involvement of the private sector,' he added.

Economic diversification requires new skills, market information and capacity building of exporters and providers of trade-support services alike. Small economies cannot afford to provide the trade-support services required, but economies of scale can be achieved through regional cooperation, according to the strategy. The Caribbean Export Development Agency and ITC are working on the development of a project to contribute to the achievement of these goals and to assist Member States in the implementation of the strategy, Mr. von Kirchbach said. 'It is the implementation of the strategy in a manner that responds to existing market needs that ensures that the outcomes are sustainable and long lasting.'

CARICOM, founded in 1972, is a regional association with the following Member States: [Antigua and Barbuda](#), [The Bahamas](#), [Barbados](#), [Belize](#), [Dominica](#), [Grenada](#), [Guyana](#), [Haiti](#), [Jamaica](#), Montserrat, [St. Kitts and Nevis](#), [Saint Lucia](#), [St. Vincent and the Grenadines](#), [Suriname](#), and [Trinidad and Tobago](#).



ITC will provide ongoing coverage of the launch and panel discussions on 11 June via its Twitter channel, @ITCnews.

ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. ITC assists small- and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economy countries to become more competitive in global markets, contributing to sustainable economic development within the frameworks of the Aid for Trade agenda and the Millennium Development Goals.

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