



PRESS RELEASE: GENEVA

15.03.11

ITC STAGES CRUCIAL TRAINING TO HELP REGION'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SECTOR

On March 29th – 31st, St. Lucia will host an important developmental event for regional economies and their creative communities.

The regional training seminar on assessing the economic contribution and performance of creative industries to national economies is organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC), in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), as part of ITC's work towards increasing the export capacity and success of, small and medium business sectors in developing countries.

Based on statistics from a recent Creative Economy Report by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Creative Industries is one of the fastest growing sectors globally. According to the report, the sector makes an estimated 7% contribution to world GDP and is forecasted to grow annually by 8-10%.

This growth has spread to the Caribbean region in the form of growing interest in the export of cultural products and services. This growing interest however, is yet to be turned into meaningful exports as there still remains a significant imbalance in the region's trade in cultural goods. A report prepared by the former Caribbean Regional Negotiation Machinery (now Office of Trade Negotiations) estimated that the region imports US\$ 88.6 million cultural products and exports only US\$ 2.3 million. The three-day seminar at the Bay Garden Resort in St. Lucia will provide national and regional statistical officers with strategies and methodologies for effectively collecting data on the Creative Industries. The strategies are aimed at allowing them to monitor more effectively the industries' contribution to the GDP and will assist policy makers in developing appropriate incentives and frameworks for promoting the sector. ITC Senior Trade Promotion Officer Jeanette Sutherland will facilitate the seminar. She explains that the initiative is part of a wider European Union funded project (promoting CARIFORUM Creative Industries) being implemented by ITC in partnership with the Caribbean Export Development Agency. The project is designed to promote the Creative sector as a viable contributor to CARIFORUM's export diversification and export growth goals.

"Two-thirds of the project focuses on building capacity among micro, medium, and small enterprises and support institutions within the craft and design sub-sector," said Sutherland. "This is to allow those enterprises to better respond to international market demands, particularly with regard to product design and development. However, reliable and timely data is seen as a fundamental building block for the development of the Creative Industries as a whole. It is in this context, that part of the project is dedicated to assist with some of the data challenges faced by the sector."

The training seminar will be opened by St. Lucia's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs, Charlotte Tessa Mangal. During the three-day event she will also be joined by her Jamaican counterpart, Investment, Industry and Commerce Minister, Karl Samuda. Experts from across the world are scheduled to participate in the seminar. Special presentations will be made by: the International Trade Centre, World Intellectual Property Organization, World Trade Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Department of Canadian Heritage, Kings College London, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, CARICOM Secretariat, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, representatives from CARICOM's ministries of trade, local and regional statistical offices, regional industry associations, and more.



ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. ITC enables SMEs in developing countries to become more competitive in global markets, leading to sustainable economic development and contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

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