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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CaPRI Seeks to Prepare the Caribbean for a Post-EPA World

Caribbean Think Tank Launches Six-Month Long Modelling Study

The debate over the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the European Union and CARIFORUM has exercised governments, academics, journalists and ordinary citizens. Lively and engaging, the debate has nonetheless revealed a wide divide between proponents and opponents. Each side has taken positions that, at times, seem mutually irreconcilable. In consequence, ordinary citizens can be forgiven for feeling bewildered. Meanwhile, though most governments are pressing ahead with the plan to approve the agreement, some Caribbean countries have responded to criticisms by holding off proceeding, until certain amendments are made, particularly the issue of 'mandatory review' and conflicts with regionalisation processes.

It is still unclear just what the gains and losses of the new trade regime will be for ordinary citizens. This has forced commentators to rely on informed speculation. Not surprisingly, one consequence of such a methodology is that predictions vary, sometimes wildly. Moreover, governments are not always sure how to prepare their citizens, let alone their business communities, for the new dispensation. This is because they cannot entirely be sure what the threats and opportunities of the EPA will be.

Given this information shortage, and in keeping with its mandate to generate timely and relevant research for regional development, the Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CaPRI) has launched an exercise which will attempt to answer some of the many questions. In particular, we will make use of a regional economic model, as well as political economic research across the region, to identify who the winners and losers under the EPA will be. Running over the next six months, it is hoped that this project will yield a better understanding of the future course on which the Caribbean is embarking. With these results, governments will be able to prepare their countries for the adjustments needed to maximise the benefits of the EPA, while minimising its negative impacts.

CaPRI is an independent think tank headquartered in Jamaica, with operations throughout the region. Committed to evidence-based research to assist policy-makers, it eagerly welcomes input from Caribbean citizens who would like to contribute to the region's development.

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