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Bridgetown, BARBADOS, 4 April 2012/ CE/ JO/ ACP: A forum set for July aims to help businesses capitalise on the Caribbean's free trade agreement with Europe, which has not seen many notable outcomes since it was signed in October 2008.

To address the issue, the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) in partnership with the [ACP Business Climate](#)^[1] and the European Union will be hosting the 2nd CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum to take place in the United Kingdom in July 2012, with the theme **“Making the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Work”**.

The forum's main objectives include creating awareness about the Agreement and to promote business opportunities within sectors that are readily positioned to do business in the European Union. Entrepreneurs are invited to register their interest in participating by 30 April 2012. ([Download Invitation for Participants](#)^[2] ; [Expression of Interest form](#)^[3] and [Company Profile Information form](#)^[4] [here](#))

Caribbean Export executive director Ms Pamela Coke Hamilton said what she wants to see is increased investment in the Caribbean and for the region to see this as a new frontier that they can enter and not be intimidated.

"It is wide open, there are potential niche markets in France, in the diasporic market, in the African diaspora. There are investments in the Netherlands, Holland. So I think we need to take the time to develop the relationships and that is why the business breakfasts are so important. Once we have those we will start the matching or pairing up of businesses with investors so at the end of the day, they will see something tangible," she noted at the launch of the CARIFORUM-EU initiative at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre last week, as cited in the *Jamaica Observer*.

The plan involves pushing the uniqueness of the region and the diversity of its goods and services. This will be done through a focus on "nurturing our world-class brands, telling our unique stories and creating memorable experiences worth sharing".

"We have decided to utilise this forum through a series of meetings, business breakfasts with various private sector entities and business people, distributors, networks, matchmaking, and the EU market looking at joint venture partnerships. We will be going to France, Germany and London," continued Coke Hamilton.

At the end of the Olympics event, also held in London during this period, Coke Hamilton hopes to see at least 60,000 orders for Caribbean products from various European entities. She also hopes the planned interventions by Caribbean Export will encourage Caribbean exporters to let go of their fear and get excited about seeking investment in that part of the world.

She noted that it presents an unparalleled opportunity for the entity to provide a desperately needed "jump-start" to the

utilisation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), signed with the European Union three years ago.

Coke Hamilton complained the agreement has garnered very little momentum among Caribbean businesses since then.

Caribbean Export also launched its Break Point regional business competition at the event, which also uses the CARIFORUM-EC EPA to drive entrepreneurship.

Caribbean Export is the only regional trade and investment promotion agency in the African, Caribbean and Pacific group. It was established in 1996 from an Implementing Management Unit of the Caricom Regional Trade Development Programme by an Intergovernmental trade agreement as the trade promotion agency of the 15 member states of CARIFORUM.

(Pictured: Caribbean Export Executive Director Ms Pamela Coke Hamilton)

- Caribbean Export Development Agency/ The Jamaican Observer/ ACP Press

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ITP_CaribExport.pdf ^[5]	400.11 KB
EOI_CARIFORUM-EU-FORUM.pdf ^[6]	394.12 KB
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