

## **Various Levels of Economic Integration in the CARIFORUM Region**

CARIFORUM is really an incomplete free trade agreement (FTA) between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic. The FTA so far covers trade in goods only, while a built-in agenda exists for negotiations to include Services, Intellectual Property and Investment, among others.

CARICOM is a fully integrated customs union and has been notified and accepted in the WTO under GATT Article XXIV. A common external tariff (CET) is in force with respect to imports from non-CARICOM sources, although there are exceptions to the CET for a limited number of tariff lines for specific member states. CARICOM is moving to a deeper level of integration called the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) in which, to the existing free movement of goods will be added services, labor, capital and the rights of establishment. Within CARICOM exists two sub-groupings: the more developed countries and the less developed countries (LDCs). Six of the independent LDCs are together forming an economic union : the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

Hence the EPA being negotiated between CARIFORUM and the EU is somewhat more complicated than may seem initially (as integration within the region is not fully done). Some policies or negotiation fields EU wishes to integrate into the EPA are not yet harmonized within Cariforum.

(Original Version, by Claudius Preville)