

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Press Release (No.14) MFA

April 11, 2005

BARBADOS TO WORK CLOSER WITH FRANCE

Barbados is seeking to forge closer ties with France, particularly with its overseas Departments of Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana.

This was one of the many issues discussed recently when French Ambassador, His Excellency Charley Causeret, called on Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Dame Billie Miller. The Ambassador complimented Barbados on the role it played in CARICOM and expressed the desire to see the French Departments more active in the Association of Caribbean States.

Dame Billie recalled that Barbadians had been involved in cultural, sporting and educational exchanges with Martinique and Guadeloupe many years ago and she expressed a wish for these linkages to be resuscitated.

She pointed out that multi-destination tourism could also be used as a means of increasing the flow of French tourist to the English speaking Caribbean. Barbados also expressed interest in visa exemptions for short stay visitors from Barbados to enter the French overseas Departments.

The Senior Minister and the Ambassador discussed the cost of security for small states and examined the possibility of cooperation to combat the scourge of drug trafficking.

Discussions also centered around the possibility of collaboration in the cultural, medical and agricultural sectors.

Both the Senior Minister and Ambassador Causeret touched on issues relating to training opportunities for Barbadians in several areas including customs.

Other topics of discussion were the current situation in Haiti and current issues in international trade, especially the process to determine the new Director General of the World Trade Organisation.

Barbados established relations with France in 1968. France's Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago is also accredited to Barbados. **(BGIS)**