

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade

Press Release (No.30) MFA

28 October 2009

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### **BARBADOS AND SWITZERLAND SIGN AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT**

The signing of an Air Services Agreement between Barbados and Switzerland should serve "to expand international air services opportunities and facilitate increased opportunities for tourism, trade and commercial activity" between the two countries.

That is the view of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Senator Maxine McClean, who was speaking after signing the treaty between the two countries today. Ambassador of Switzerland, Armin Mitz, signed on behalf of his Government.

Noting that the agreement would be welcomed especially by the aeronautical authorities in Barbados, Senator McClean said: "Barbados sees this agreement as providing an important role framework for facilitating the development of air links, particularly for tourism purposes between our two countries. In this regard, with the imminent appointment of a Vice President for Europe by the Barbados Tourism Authority, it is expected that there will be enhanced focus on continental Europe."

Senator McClean also pointed out that since Barbados did not have a national airline, there was "considerable interest in facilitating the operation of airlines of its bilateral partners".

The Foreign Minister also expressed the hope that the signing of the agreement would "make it possible for airlines to offer the travelling and shipping public a variety of service options at innovative and competitive prices". Ambassador Mitz noted that the agreement would be beneficial to both countries. Stating that "the times were not good for tourism" and that it was a very important sector to his country, he observed: "Tourism for Switzerland is about 12% of the national income; more important than the banking sector. Each time you have an economic crisis, it has a lot of consequences for that industry." (END)