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ACP Small island economies: from vulnerabilities to opportunities

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Biodata of Speakers

Lino Briguglio – Director, Islands and Small States Institute, Foundation for International Studies, University of Malta

Professor Lino Briguglio is Director of the Small Islands and Small States Institute and of the Gozo Centre, both at the University of Malta, where he was formerly Head of the Economics Department and the Banking and Finance Department. He has published a large number of papers on islands and small states and has also edited a series of four books on Vulnerability, Resilience and Competitiveness of Small States, published by the University of Malta in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat. Furthermore, he is the author of three books on the Maltese economy. He was formerly editor of the series Islands, published by Cassel/Pinter of London. Professor Briguglio has also worked as a consultant to several international organizations, including UNDSA, UNEP, UNDP, UNCTAD, World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, SOPAC and CARICOM on matters related to the economies of small states. He has represented the Maltese government in many international conferences dealing with islands' and small states' affairs.

Professor Briguglio is a member of the Malta Fair Trading Commission and the Malta Commission for Sustainable Development, and serves on a number of Government Committees and University of Malta Boards. Formerly he was a core member of the Malta EU Steering and Action Committee during the Malta negotiations for EU membership. He is also part of Working Group II of the IPCC, where he is a lead author for the chapter on SIDS in the Third, Fourth and Fifth assessment reports. He was part of the team that was awarded the Nobel prize to the IPCC in 2007 and was presented with a certificate in this regard. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Exeter, UK and an Honours and Masters degree in Economics from the University of Malta. He obtained a Diploma in Social Studies from the University of Oxford.

Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra – Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Land Locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and Special Adviser on Africa

Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra is United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and Special Adviser on Africa. At the time of his appointment at the United Nations, Mr. Diarra was serving as the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations in New York. Ambassador Diarra has over 30 years of professional experience in international relations, law and development. Ambassador Diarra has advanced knowledge and experience of bilateral and multilateral relations and proven skills in international negotiations and international consensus building. He was also involved in the national reconciliation efforts of Mali which paved the road to peace, democracy and development. Ambassador Diarra has been actively involved in furthering African integration efforts and the African development agenda at the international level. He was one of the lead negotiators on these issues at the African Union summits since 1982. From his decade long experience in multilateral diplomacy he became conversant with multifaceted issues of the UN, its intergovernmental processes and workings of its secretariat. Ambassador Diarra made important contributions to the reform process of the United Nations aimed at strengthening the global role of the United Nations in the economic and development matters.

Ambassador Diarra was Vice President of the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly from (2005 – 2006). He co-chaired the open-ended informal consultations on strengthening the role of ECOSOC to lead to the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 61/16. He also co-chaired the informal consultations on resolution 60/265 on follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit. Ambassador Diarra also has been actively involved in the work of the group of Ambassadors "Friends of the system wide coherence". He has been active advocate for the cause of Africa, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries. He served as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries. Ambassador Diarra obtained masters degrees in international public law and international relations from Dakar University in Senegal. He received an honorary doctorate of Philosophy in Law from Hannam University of the Republic of Korea. He is member currently member of the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Council on fragile States. He was born in Kayes, Mali. He is married with two children.

Pierre Encontre – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Pierre Encontre is Chief of the "Special Programmes" in the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva. His UN career has been entirely devoted to countries with special needs, particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS). His interest in SIDS developed during his field assignments in the Caribbean and Pacific regions in the 1980s and early 1990s. Over the last two decades, this focus specialized into work on "status issues", notably, advising countries on the implications of graduation from LDC status. This has brought him, since 1997, to closely cooperate with the governments of Cape Verde, Maldives, Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, and with relevant UN bodies in the context of the triennial review of the UN list of LDCs. In December 2011, UNCTAD and the Indian Ocean Commission jointly organized, in Mauritius, an international meeting of experts on "addressing the vulnerabilities of SIDS more effectively". The outcome of that event is receiving special attention on the part of UNCTAD member States in the context of UNCTAD XIII (Doha, 21-26 April 2012).

Michael Hailu – CTA, The Netherlands

Michael Hailu is an Ethiopian national and the Director of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA). Mr Hailu has over 25 years of professional experience working in Africa and Asia in communications and knowledge management in agriculture and related areas. Prior to joining CTA at the end of May 2010, Mr Hailu was Director of Communications and a member of the Senior Leadership Team of the World Agroforestry Centre based in Nairobi, Kenya. From 1999-2007, Mr. Hailu lived and worked in Indonesia as Director of Information at the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). Mr. Hailu has degrees in Information Sciences and Economics from the University of Pittsburgh in the United States and Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. He has also been trained in strategic leadership at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

Ena Harvey – IICA Management Coordinator – Caribbean Region and Agribusiness Specialist in Agrotourism

Ena Harvey holds an MSc in Process Engineering and Food & Postharvest Technology from the University of Guelph, Canada, and a BSc First Class (Hons) degree in Tropical Agriculture from the University of the West Indies, Trinidad. Since 2002 she has spearheaded IICA's initiative in Agrotourism linkages and succeeded in laying the groundwork for an IICA Programme in Agrotourism through (1) Strengthening the policy and institutional framework in support of linkages between the two sectors; (2) Developing a knowledge community in Latin America and the Caribbean, and (3) Providing technical assistance to IICA offices in LAC in the development of national and regional initiatives in Agrotourism and Rural Tourism. She has delivered numerous feature addresses and lead papers on agrotourism at national, regional and international meetings, and currently serves as IICA's representative on the Board of Directors, and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association Advocacy Committee, and is the Vice Chairman of the Sustainable Tourism Committee of the Caribbean Tourism Organisation.

H.E. Mr. Jagdish Dharamchand Koonjul – Ambassador of Mauritius

Mr. Koonjul is a graduate of the University of Bombay. He began his career in 1974 as Education Officer at the Presidency College in Mauritius, following which he served as Second Secretary at the Ministry of External Affairs, Tourism and Emigration. He was then posted to the Permanent Mission of Mauritius to the United Nations in New York, and served with his country's embassies in Brussels, Paris and Washington D.C. In October 1994, he was appointed Deputy High Commissioner of Mauritius in New Delhi, and in January 1997, Head of the Multilateral Political Directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Mr. Koonjul was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in January 1999.

Throughout his distinguished career, Mr. Koonjul participated in numerous international meetings and represented his country at such events as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization Conference in Vienne and the Conference of Labour Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries. He actively participated in the renegotiations of the ACP-EU Conventions in 1983 and 1985 and was the chief negotiator of bilateral Mauritius/Canada and Mauritius US textile agreements. As Head of Multilateral Political Directorate, he was responsible for all matters concerning the United Nations, the OAU, Non Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth and the Francophone and represented his country in several meetings of these organizations. He has also been a major player in the peace process in the Comoros Archipelago, a neighbouring country which faced the problem of secession since 1997.

He was posted to the Mauritius Mission to the UN as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative in July 2001 and represented Mauritius in the Security Council. He presided over the Council in January 2002, and became the first Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. He also served as Vice President of ECOSOC in 2004 and Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) from 2003 to 2006. He was the G77 chief negotiator for the Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States, which culminated in the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy in 2005. Ambassador Koonjul is a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands and of the Board of the Mauritius Oceanography Institute. He has published a number of articles on Small Islands and sustainable development.

Robert Read – Senior Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Lancaster, United Kingdom

Dr Robert Read is Senior Lecturer in International Economics at the University of Lancaster, UK. He has a PhD in Economics in International Business from the University of Reading and was formerly a professional Economist in the Head Office of Unilever plc. He is currently the Director of the MSc in International Business at the Lancaster University Management School.

Dr Read is a leading international authority on the growth policies and performance of small economies, much of it in collaboration with Professor Harvey Armstrong, and he has published widely in leading academic journals and books. Dr Read has acted as a consultant to the ACP Group of States, the European Commission, the Falkland Islands Government, the UK Foreign Office, the Dutch Foreign Ministry, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

H.E. Shirley Skerritt-Andrew – Ambassador of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States

Ambassador Shirley Skerritt-Andrew was appointed Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium and the European Union in October 2008 by the four Eastern Caribbean States of Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Ambassador Skerritt-Andrew, a national of St. Kitts and Nevis, studied at the University of the West Indies and at University College London and is an economist by training. She was until recently a senior advisor to the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, and represented the Government at a range of international fora in the economic and sustainable development fields. A European specialist, Ambassador Skerritt-Andrew, was one of the lead officials dealing with European affairs and was a primary liaison point with the EU and the European Commission's Delegation to the Eastern Caribbean. She has worked as an economic planner in Jamaica and in the public sector in the United Kingdom. The Ambassador has also worked as a freelance journalist and has had an ongoing involvement with literature, the arts and culture. Ambassador Skerritt-

Andrew, who was for some time the GEF Operational Focal Point for St. Kitts and Nevis, has a deep interest in environmental matters and has devoted considerable time to alternative energy issues, including the exploration of potential for the exploitation of geo-thermal energy on Nevis and the development of bio-fuels as a bi-product of sugar.

Constance Vigilance – Economic Adviser, Economic Affairs Division, Commonwealth Secretariat

Ms. Vigilance works at the Commonwealth Secretariat as the Economic Adviser responsible for small states. She holds a Master's degree in Economic Policy Management from Columbia University in the city of New York and a first degree in Economics from the University of Guyana. Prior to joining the Commonwealth Secretariat, Ms. Vigilance worked at the Caribbean Community Secretariat, the Ministry of Finance, Guyana and the Central Bank of Guyana.