

**27 January 2009, London**

**Arvin Boolell will attend the Commonwealth Meeting on EPA**

Dr. the Hon. Arvin Boolell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, will be in London, UK, to participate in the Commonwealth Meeting on Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which takes place on Tuesday 27 January 2009.

Negotiations for the full EPA are not yet completed. There are several issues of key importance outstanding for the negotiations including services and trade Related Issues, thus the importance of such a meeting, in particular for ACP countries like Mauritius. The EPA marks a radical shift from the usual LOME type unilateral preferences to a reciprocal trade agreement.

The interim/full EPAs initiated by members have resulted in substantial differences in the treatment of the ACP exports to the EC, which has in a way nullified the regional integration dimension of the EPA as well as provided less favorable treatment, in particular on the rules of origin.

Consequently collective action by the ACP and the EC need to be undertaken in the context of the full EPA, especially on issues such as the rules of origin, Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) to ensure that the EPA delivers more meaningful results.

Moreover, a meeting between Dr. Arvin Boolell and Lord Malloch Brown, UK Minister for Africa, Asia and the United Nations (UN) is scheduled for Wednesday 28 January 2009. Minister Boolell will also meet Baroness Margaret Ashton of Upholland, European Trade Commissioner.