February 27, 2012

Chairman of the CARICOM Competition Commission Dr Kusha Haraksingh will be in Nadi, Fiji on Friday 2 March 2012, at the invitation of the Commonwealth Secretariat, to participate in consultations with representatives of 14 Pacific Forum Island countries on trade and development negotiations.

The Pacific Group is currently locked in negotiations with Australia and New Zealand, and is keen to benefit from the Caribbean experience of negotiations with the European Union which culminated in the Economic Partnership Agreement signed in 2008, and with on-going negotiations with Canada.

Dr Haraksingh is the Lead CARIFORUM and CARICOM negotiator on Legal and Institutional Issues, both in the EU and Canada negotiations, and has been asked to assist the Pacific particularly in the design of asymmetrical trade arrangements suitable for developing countries entering into agreements with more developed partners, while at the same time taking into account the different stages of development of the Forum Island countries themselves and balancing different interests, capacities and priorities among them.

A similar challenge faced the Caribbean in the EPA negotiations with Europe. Dr Haraksingh has also been asked to share experiences on the role of regional negotiating mechanisms in coordinating and developing thematic technical issues, and in maintaining regional solidarity throughout the negotiating process.