

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs

Administrative Building
Kingstown, Bay St.
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, W.I.



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HON. FREDRICK STEPHENSON LEADS DELEGATION TO 59TH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL FOR
TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (COTED)**

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES, November 29, 2024 — The 59th Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) concluded today at the CARICOM Headquarters in Georgetown, Guyana. The two-day meeting, held from November 27-28, 2024, brought together CARICOM Ministers of Trade to deliberate on critical issues impacting the region's trade and economic development.

During the meeting, Ministers engaged in robust discussions on key areas, including advancing the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), enhancing regional trade policies, and addressing the challenges posed by global economic trends. Special emphasis was placed on food security, energy sustainability, and improving the ease of doing business across the region.

The CARICOM Secretary-General, Dr. Carla Barnett, commended the Ministers for their commitment to fostering economic resilience and cooperation among Member States. In her closing remarks, she noted: "The discussions held over the past two days have reinforced our shared vision for a more integrated and self-reliant Caribbean. It is through unity and strategic action that we will overcome challenges and seize opportunities for growth."

A significant outcome of the meeting was the agreement to strengthen mechanisms for resolving trade disputes and improving the implementation of the CSME framework. Additionally, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to regional collaboration in response to climate change's economic impacts. The meeting concluded with a photograph featuring the CARICOM Ministers

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of Trade alongside Dr. Barnett, symbolising the collective dedication to advancing regional trade and economic development.

The Vincentian delegation comprised of Honourable Frederick Stephenson; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs, Mrs. Okolo John Patrick; Director of Foreign Trade, Mrs. Nicolette Dalton; Trade Officer II, and Mr. Romel Currency Director (Ag.) of Consumer Affairs.

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