

CARIBCAN: The Main Elements

In February 1986 the Canadian government announced the creation of CARIBCAN, a program for trade, investment and industrial cooperation for the Commonwealth Caribbean region. In June 1986 CARIBCAN came into effect after the required legislation was adopted by the Canadian Parliament.

CARIBCAN's main feature is the unilateral extension by Canada of preferential duty-free access to the Canadian market for almost all imports from the Commonwealth Caribbean countries. But CARIBCAN also contains measures to encourage Canadian investment and other forms of industrial cooperation with the region. These measures include a program to strengthen the exporting capabilities of Caribbean countries, focussing on the Canadian market; seminars for business people from the region on ways to develop markets in Canada for Caribbean products; the development of marketing strategies in Canada; and access to the regional offices in the Canadian Department of Regional Industrial Expansion to assist Caribbean trade commissioners in their trade promotion efforts in Canada. In brief, CARIBCAN has created a new and more favourable environment for economic partnership.

CARIBCAN's basic objectives, then, are to enhance the Commonwealth Caribbean's existing trade and export earnings; improve the trade and economic development prospects of the region; promote new investment opportunities; and encourage enhanced economic integration and cooperation within the region.