



## Press Release

**To: The News/Entertainment Editors**

**[St Michael, Barbados, April 10, 2015]**

### **CARIFORUM to explore greater international prospects for Caribbean Music**

Growing the multi- million dollar Caribbean Music Industry will be a major focus of the 3<sup>rd</sup> CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum which will be held April 15-16 at the Hilton Rose Hall, Montego Bay Jamaica.

David Sanders, Producer at Coke Studio Africa, Eldar Ástþórsson, Senior PR Manager – Europe, CCP Games and Ylir Music Fund, Ronald ‘Boo’ Hinkson, Performer/Artiste and Jeffrey “Assassin” Campbell, Jamaican/International Reggae Entertainer are among the experts who will be leading the discussions on opportunities to be further explored under the European Partnership Agreement (EPA) and some of the challenges facing the industry including intellectual property considerations. Optimising the industry’s close linkages with tourism development and other key sectors will also be among the matters to be explored.

Billy Grant, founder of 2Point9 Records, who will be speaking at the 3<sup>rd</sup> CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum, has stated of the Caribbean music industry:

“The Caribbean has had some successes but remains wholly untapped. As a united force, the Caribbean could actually be quite powerful. Opportunities therefore exist for forward-thinking companies and artists to forge link with Caribbean artists, producers and labels, to create new exciting up-and-coming music.”

The Forum which is being hosted by the Caribbean Export Development Agency, (Caribbean Export) is expected to attract some 150 key stakeholders from the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and the Pacific. It will also unveil sector study findings, propose potential value propositions for the industry and explore competitive advantages to make for greater strengthening of linkages between major players in the region and international partners. According to Pamela Coke Hamilton, Caribbean Export’s Executive Director, “the strength of our Caribbean artistes in live performances on the lucrative summer music festival scene in Europe is an avenue for greater opportunity. There is also an increasing appetite from Europeans for our music especially in clubs. It is my belief that we also need to further leverage technological advancements in the industry and the ever expanding distribution channels in digital music.”

Caribbean music has carved out its unique niche with its rich history, distinctive sounds and magnetic world appeal for an ever expanding range of music genres which is estimated to surpass over 100. They range from the Jamaican mento, ska, reggae and dancehall, to the Trinidadian calypso and soca (soul calypso). They also include kaiso, zouk, meringue, salsa, and bachata.

Many of the region's artistes such as Jamaica's reggae icon, Bob Marley and Trinidad's Slinger Francisco "the Mighty Sparrow," have had successful careers with numerous international hits and copping a myriad of music awards to their fame. The region's music continues to make a significant impact on other allied creative sectors including film, the fine arts, theatre, publishing, dance, fashion, advertising, special events/festivals, tourism, politics, health and other social well-being communications.

In Jamaica, the reggae industry is estimated to generate over J\$250mn per annum with Reggae Sumfest alone reportedly attracting over 30,000 visitors who spend millions of dollars during their stay. The country also boasts the highest number of recording studios per square mile anywhere in the world and producing the most new releases per capita.

"We also expect the Forum to explore the reasons why other genres may not have had the same level of success as reggae in market penetration and the environment which needs to be created to make for similar or even greater success. The Forum will be making some strong recommendations to CARIFORUM governments as well as the EU regarding incentives that can further drive growth for this very important creative industry," stated Ms Coke-Hamilton.

Caribbean artistes and their music are increasingly playing an important role in advocacy wellbeing social media advertising campaigns treating with major issues such as crime and aids. Music has even permeated the education sector with universities including the region's own University of the West Indies and the Edna Manley College for the Visual and Performing Arts embracing the study and impact of the Caribbean art form in their cultural programmes.

The CARIFORUM-EU Business Forum is organised in collaboration with the ACP Business Climate facility (BizClim). It seeks to enhance partnerships between Caribbean businesses and those in Europe, enable public-private dialogue and support the business climate reform agenda in the Caribbean. The Forum will also focus on agro-processing (cocoa, herbs and spices) and higher education.

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*Links:*

Forum website: [www.cariforum.eu](http://www.cariforum.eu)

Caribbean Export Development Agency: [www.carib-export.com](http://www.carib-export.com)

BizClim: [www.bizclim.org](http://www.bizclim.org)

Press photos: <http://www.cariforum.eu/images/press/chocolate.jpg>

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