



**ASSOCIATION OF THE OVERSEAS COUNTRIES AND
TERRITORIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (“OCTA”)**

ASSOCIATION PTOM

LGO ASSOCIATIE

OVERSØISKE LANDE OG TERRITORIERS ASSOCIATION

**Political Declaration
of
OCTA's 2010 Ministerial Conference
in Noumea, New Caledonia 28th February 2011**

The Undersigned representatives of the Governments of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the European Union (EU) have met together in New Caledonia and have

RECOGNISED

OCTs strategic position from the Poles to the Tropics: offering diverse culture, while sharing common challenges in terms of socio economic development, their unique biodiversity, size and diverse geographical climate provide for vast opportunities to enhance their cooperation with the EU;

That as Overseas Countries and Territories, they have been building relationships with their regional neighbours, where possible, in an effort to overcome their unique challenges. The remote geographical location of some Overseas Territories mitigates heavily against this process aimed at lessening or eliminating constraints in areas in which they are particularly vulnerable, such as environment, connectivity and trade;

That they are involved in a process of revision of the Overseas Association Decision, launched with the Green paper and the Communication “Elements for a new partnership between the EU and OCTs” adopted in 2008 and 2009. Following the conclusions of the Council of the European Union of December 2009, the European Commission (EC) services reported back to the Council on the progress made in the process in December 2010 and gave an indicative timeline for the adoption by the EC of the legislative proposal in March 2012 and submission to the Council in mid-2012. The EC committed to continue the dialogue with OCTs and their related Member States to exchange information and collect views in the framework of this revision process;

CONFIRMED

Their desire to strengthen a mutually beneficial, comprehensive and unique partnership with the European Union based on European citizenship and on the concept of European family, considering the diversity of the OCTs' needs and assets in terms of development and regional cooperation;

Their need for sustainability of development both generally and institutionally;

Their need for careful assessments of their vulnerability to natural and economic changes;

Their willingness to comply with international norms and standards, as well as principles of good governance, accountability and transparency;

That the OCTA 2010 Strategic Plan adopted by all the OCT governments at the Ministerial meeting in March 2010 will continue to provide guidance in the preparation of policies and planning of activities - to assist the OCTs economic and social development and environmental resilience, and in the frame of the 10TH EDF thematic regional allocation;

NOW RESOLVE THAT

1. Partnership between the EU and the OCTs

OCTs wish that the proposals and positions expressed in the Joint Position Paper adopted on February 28th will feed into the reflection conducted by the European institutions. OCTs request the European Commission to continue the dialogue, to collect views on the future partnership and to inform them of the timeline, relevant impact assessment and working groups contributing to the on-going reflection process. OCTs stress the particular importance of improving awareness within the European institutions of their issues and assets.

2. Next EU-OCT Forum

In order to build on the existing political momentum and to ensure the maximum level of consultation between the EU, the OCTs and their MS before the European Commission submits the legislative package to the Council mid-2012, OCTs would welcome the next forum of dialogue to take

place before the end of 2011.

3. Management of OCTs affairs

In the context of the reorganization of DG DEVCO, following the creation of the European External Action Service, OCTs stress the importance of sufficient capacity dedicated to the management of OCTs affairs. In this regard, OCTs urge an appropriate location in coherence with the commitments related to the renewal of the partnership, the programming exercise, and their membership of the EU family.

4. OCTA Bureau

OCTs wish to re-affirm their commitment to the establishment of the OCTA Bureau - referred to as long-term Technical Assistance by the EC-, as set out in the OCTA Political Declaration at the Ministerial Conference in Brussels in March 2010. The documentation for the long-term Technical Assistance has been completed and we urge the European Commission to finalize the process expeditiously until adoption by the College. For their part, OCTs will continue to set aside a dedicated fund for their contribution to the sustainability of the Bureau.

5. Project on Territorial strategies for innovation

In the perspective of the adoption of the project jointly developed with the European Commission under the 10th EDF on "territorial strategies for innovation in OCTs ", OCTs wish to reaffirm their full support for the project and its objectives. OCTs are committed to ensure its success and high benefits for their territories. For the management of the project at local level, they will appoint a member of the administration as project manager and set an advisory board as recommended. They will contribute to the organizational costs of the events organized at local level (workshops, training, seminars) for the duration of the project.

6. Environment and Climate Change

Mindful of the long term objectives of the cooperation with the European Commission on environment and climate change, OCTs encourage the EC to facilitate their participation and will strive to initiate meetings/seminars amongst OCTs, with the EC (such as the climate change workshop to be held in Brussels at the end of March 2011), and with other relevant partners. These

events should assist in informing the OCTs about the EU policies and strategies on biodiversity and climate change. Furthermore, OCTs welcome assistance of the European Commission in generating knowledge about the OCTs' unique biodiversity, the threats faced due to climate change as well as adaptation to these changes.

7. Trade

The European Commission is currently negotiating bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements in regions where OCTs are located. When coming into force, the tariff liberalization will erode OCTs preferences and increase the competitive pressures on OCTs industries, which export similar products on the EU market. A decrease of tariffs will seriously impact on sectors like fisheries which lack economies of scale but remain vitally important for OCT economies. We urge the European Commission to take into account the interests of the OCTs in these negotiations and to support them while improving their economic competitiveness and adapting to these additional challenges for a sustainable development.

A number of OCTs are acknowledged by global standard-setting bodies as meeting the highest standards of regulation and would welcome EU recognition of this. OCTs would also welcome European Commission support for a sustainable mechanism for the exchange of information with OCT experts through the Partnership Working party on Financial Services and ensuring there are no unfair barriers to OCT market access to the EU.

8. Equal treatment for all OCTs

OCTs call on the Commission to establish with more certainty its ability to cover additional travel and subsistence costs incurred by the most isolated OCTs when participating in Forums and other activities organized by OCTA under EU funding such as workshops and seminars.

10. Horizontal EU programs and thematic lines

OCTs would like to thank the EC for the recent targeted call for proposals for Small Islands Developing States and OCTs under the programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP – Development Cooperation Instrument). They welcome similar initiatives in future work programs which seek to improve access for OCTs, and enable the

development of regional projects of particular interest.

OCTA recently requested with DG Research a Commission Decision to allow those OCTs that meet NUTS II criteria to be eligible to the Research Potential component of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and will follow up on this closely with the EC.

10. In conformity with the provision of Chapter 1, Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations, we call on the European Commission to support all OCTs and urge the EC to ensure that the absolute rights of the citizens of the OCTs are taken into account in its negotiations and relations with countries and regional bodies.

REFERENCE

Signed in Noumea, this 28 of February 2011

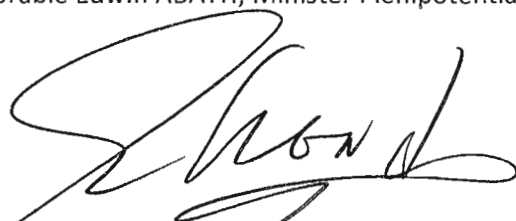
For the Delegation of **Anguilla**

Honorable Hubert B HUGHES, Chief Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development,
Investment, Commerce and Tourism



For the Delegation of **Aruba**

Honorable Edwin ABATH, Minister Plenipotentiary



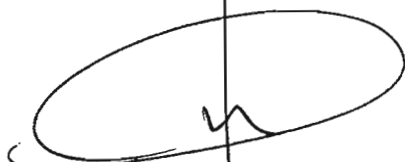
For the Delegation of **British Virgin Islands**

Honorable Julian FRASER, Minister for Communications & Works



For the Delegation of **Curaçao**

Honorable Sheldry OSEPA, Minister Plenipotentiary



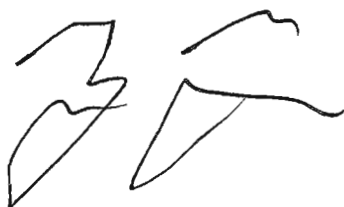
For the Delegation of **Falkland Islands**

Honorable Roger Edwards, Member of the Legislative Assembly



For the Delegation of **Greenland**

Honorable Vice Premier Jens B. FREDERIKSEN



For the Delegation of **Mayotte**

Monsieur Mirhane OUSSENI, 4ème Vice-Président du Conseil Général de Mayotte



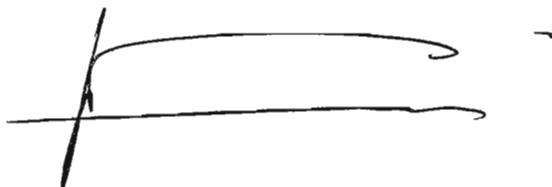
For the Delegation of **Montserrat**

Honorable Reuben T. Meade, Chief Minister of the Government of Montserrat, and Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Trade



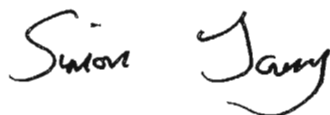
For the Delegation of **New Caledonia**

Monsieur Philippe GOMES, Président du Gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Calédonie, Chairman of OCTA



For the Delegation of **Pitcairn, Henderson Ducie & Oeno Islands**

Mr Simon YOUNG, Deputy Mayor



For the Delegation of **French Polynesia**

Monsieur Téva ROHRITSCH, Ministre de la reconversion économique



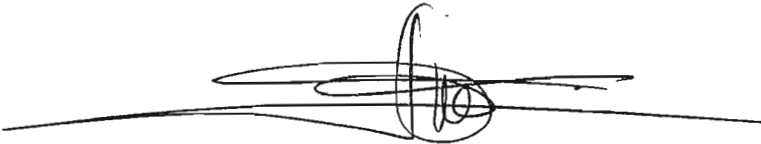
For the Delegation of **Saint Helena, Ascension, Tristan da Cunha**
Honorable Mervyn R. Yon, Elected Member of the Executive Council



For the Delegation of **Sint Maarten**
Honorable Sarah WESCOT-WILLIAMS, Prime Minister



For the Delegation of **Saint-Pierre-and-Miquelon**
Monsieur Stéphane ARTANO, Président du Conseil Territorial



For the Delegation of **Territory of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands**
Monsieur Emmanuel REUILLARD, Directeur des Affaires Internationales de la mer et de l'Antarctique



For the Delegation of **Wallis and Futuna**
Monsieur Robert LAUFOAULU, Sénateur

