



OCTAssociation

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

ASSOCIATION PTOM

LGO ASSOCIATIE

OVERSØISKE LANDE OG TERRITORIERS ASSOCIATION

RESOLUTIONS OF OCTA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DECEMBER 4, 2013

Political Declaration of OCTA's Ministerial Conference
Brussels, 04 December 2013

PREAMBLE

The Representatives of the Overseas Countries and Territories met in Brussels, BELGIUM, on 4th December 2013 on the occasion of their 12th OCTA Ministerial Conference. They reviewed their Country/Territory's situation, cooperation with the European Union (EU), the revised Overseas Association Decision (OAD), and the opportunities open to Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) to enhance their competitiveness through innovation, and adopted the following Declaration:

As we near the end of the revision process which began in 2008 with the Green Paper, we recognize the efforts of the European Union to produce a new OAD.

OCTs look forward to working in true partnership with the European Union based on our shared vision, to strengthen our global competitiveness, develop sustainable and resilient economies and build strong strategic partnerships in our regions where possible. We look forward to working in an environment governed by the principles of cooperation, open communication, transparency, and mutual respect.

OCTs recognize the critical importance of effective dialogue in the new partnership, particularly at the political level, and have agreed to institute a Board of Chair consisting of three political leaders of OCTs (Chair, Vice-Chair and Immediate Past Chair). The Board is mandated to give the necessary political support to the Executive Committee with regards to the implementation of political resolutions.

Innovation and Competitiveness

OCTs embrace innovation as one of the most important pillars of competitiveness in an increasingly globalised world. We subscribe to a broad definition that includes process, marketing and organisational innovation.

We welcome the European Union partnering with the OCTs to be more innovative in expanding and diversifying sustainable economies, but not limited to:

- achieving green growth;
- using natural resources while mitigating the impact on the environment;

- consolidating OCTs competitive advantages in sectors such as tourism, fisheries and financial services;
- exploring and developing potential in niche markets.

OCTs will therefore ensure that support for innovation initiatives is provided at the highest political levels. They will define their individual “innovation and competitiveness gap” and formulate corresponding territorial strategies for innovation.

POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS

On implementing the new OAD, the OCTs call upon the Commission to:

1. Innovation and competitiveness

Facilitate the effective implementation of the Territorial Strategies for Innovation project.

Support the OCTs’ strategies to develop niche markets, including in high value sustainable tourism and increase OCTs exports on the regional and international markets.

Support the OCTs green growth in areas such as renewable energies, eco-tourism, mitigation of the impact of development projects and sustainable use of marine and terrestrial natural resources.

Support research and development projects, in particular by providing technical assistance to entrepreneurs leading innovative projects.

Ensure that financial framework, financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building are available to enable OCTs to innovate and be competitive, in particular by improving accessibility of horizontal programmes such as Horizon 2020 and COSME.

2. Cooperation Effectiveness

European Development Fund

Further simplify procedures applicable to OCTs in order to reduce the administrative burden and improve effectiveness of EU support. Taking into account the size of the envelopes, make further adjustments through derogations on procedures which are less relevant in European overseas territories (eg frequent reports on macroeconomic stability).

Allocate the OCTs 11th European Development Fund regional envelope in close cooperation with OCTA. This will enable an adequate distribution between geographic and thematic programs and address the specific needs of all OCTs.

Ensure that European Commission structures for programming effectively support regional cooperation between the OCTs, ORs and ACPs encouraged by the EU.

Support the development of statistical capacities, taking into consideration the management capacity of individual OCTs, to enable the EU to effectively monitor the progress of its programmes in the OCTs and improve the standard and applicability of key indicators to allow international comparisons.

Trade

Convene regular meetings on EU trade negotiations with third countries to provide timely information to:

- limit adverse impact on OCTs economies;
- allow time to adapt to trade liberalisation involving the EU and third countries since the exports structure of most OCTs and neighbouring economies are relatively similar.

Assist in the implementation of the Registered Exporter Scheme, with a guidance note for local exporters, and provide guidance to OCTs competent authorities on the implementation of revised rules of origin.

Recognise the achievements of OCTs with financial services in complying with global standards of tax transparency and regulation as established by the EU, G8, G20, OECD and other legally sanctioned international standard-setting bodies and fully engage OCTs in future dialogues and consultations on the financial services sector to ensure that standards take account of OCTs considerations and are implemented on the principle of a level-playing field.

Horizontal programmes

Facilitate participation of OCTs to EU programmes, by raising awareness at Directorates-General level of the added value that OCTs bring to EU programmes when acting as regional hubs and centres of excellence.

Ensure that OCT eligibility is mentioned in the multi-annual work programmes and set up calls for proposal targeting OCTs.

EU Citizenship and Tuition fees

Support the awareness of OCT students' rights by making special mention of OCT student rights on the website of the Commission. All OCT citizens are EU nationals and have full EU citizen rights and OCT students therefore enjoy equal benefits as EU Nationals students. Mainland Europe based universities are often not aware of these rights for OCT students and treat them as non-EU nationals. This limits the ability of OCT students to access education in the EU and to pay tuition fees that normally apply to EU nationals.

3. Environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction

Support and facilitate OCTs political visibility by involving them in relevant events on environment, climate change, renewable energies and disaster risk reduction in the EU, regionally and internationally.

Ensure adequate follow-up to the 2013 Renewable Energy Study and promote renewable energy in the OCTs through development of networks to share best practices, experience and information on available funding mechanisms.

Create awareness of research possibilities in the OCTs and involve local authorities in research conducted in their countries and territories so that they can attract smart technologies and innovation.

Moreover, OCTs have a great potential to monitor the effects of climate change from poles to tropics and develop green OCT regional hubs which can support effectively the management of environmental global challenges.

Ensure the inclusion of a specific priority for biodiversity and climate change in the OCTs in the multi annual working programmes of the Development Cooperation Instrument for 2014-2020, as planned in 2013 by the Environment and EuropeAid General Directors. This priority shall benefit from an annual financial contribution of at least 4 million euros and take into account the results and added value of the first years of the BEST scheme.

Ensure ownership and participation, jointly with the OCTs and the Member States, in the reflection for a future BEST facility for Europe overseas where benefits accrue to the OCTs under recognised international access and benefit sharing schemes.

Facilitate access to the environmental programme Life so that OCTs can contribute to EU environmental objectives, in accordance with the provisions related to OCTs in the regulation.

4. OCT-EU Dialogue


Elaborate jointly with OCTs and the Members States by mid-2014 a methodology for the working parties referred to in the article 13 of the OAD. This methodology, in line with the OAD provisions, shall aim at reinforcing the added value of the technical discussions, ensuring effectively a partnership dialogue and shall include the use of modern technologies where appropriate.

Recognize the importance to give greater political voice to the collective issues affecting OCTs and facilitate the OCTA Board of Chair in the implementation of its mandate.

Make greater use of informal dialogue to advance issues of interest to OCTs as foreseen under the new OAD. Teleconference and ICT facilities shall be used when needed.

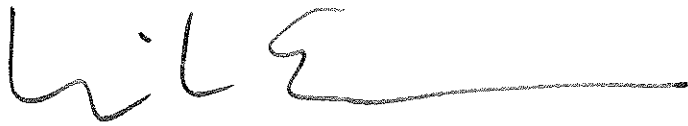
REFERENCE

Signed in Brussels, this 4th day of December 2013



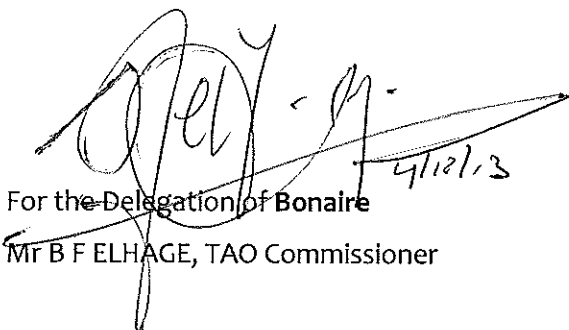
For the Delegation of **Anguilla**

The Honourable Mr. Hubert B HUGHES, Chief Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Investment, Commerce and Tourism



For the Delegation of **Aruba**

The Honourable Mr. Mike EMAN, Prime Minister



For the Delegation of **Bonaire**
Mr B F ELHAGE, TAO Commissioner



For the Delegation of **British Virgin Islands**

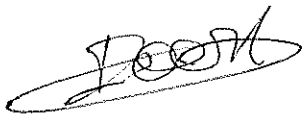
Dr. the Honourable D. Orlando SMITH OBE, Premier and Minister of Finance



For the Delegation of **Cayman Islands**

Mr. Charles G Parchment

Acting Representative of the Government in the United Kingdom



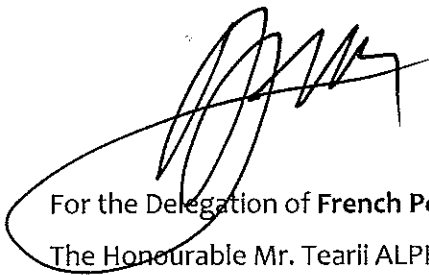
For the Delegation of **Curaçao**

The Honourable Mr. Ivar ASJES, Prime Minister



For the Delegation of **Falkland Islands**

The Honourable Roger Anthony EDWARDS, Member of the Legislative Assembly



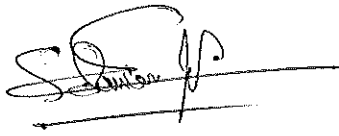
For the Delegation of **French Polynesia**

The Honourable Mr. Tearii ALPHA, Ministre des ressources marines, des mines et de la recherche



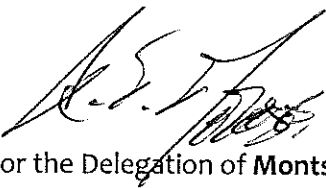
For the Delegation of **Greenland**

The Honourable Ms. Aleqa HAMMOND, Premier



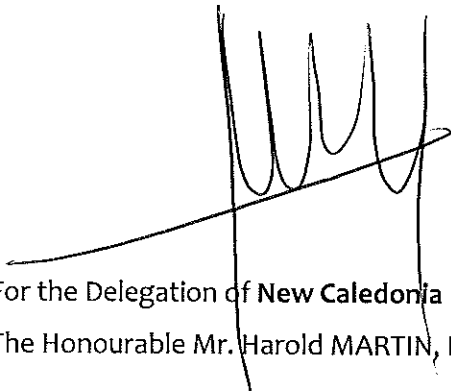
For the Delegation of **Mayotte**

Mr. Jean-Pierre SALINIÈRE, Directeur Général, Services Conseil Général, as Head of Delegation



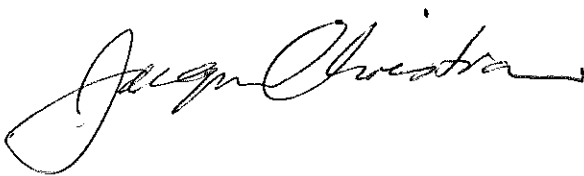
For the Delegation of **Montserrat**

The Honourable Mr. Reuben T. MEADE, Premier



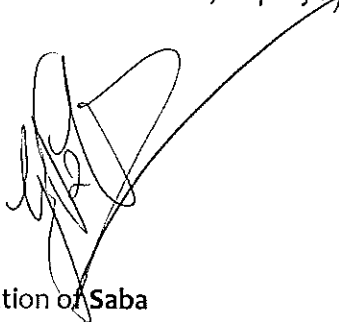
For the Delegation of **New Caledonia**

The Honourable Mr. Harold MARTIN, Président du gouvernement



For the Delegation of **Pitcairn**

Ms. Jacqueline Beth CHRISTIAN, Deputy Mayor

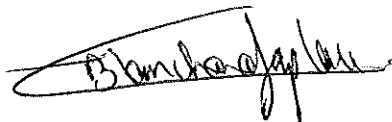


For the Delegation of **Saba**

Mr. Gerardus VAN VOORST, European Union Representative

For the Delegation of **Saint Barthélemy**

Mme. Elodie LAPLACE, Conseillère territoriale de la Collectivité de Saint Barthélemy
Déléguée aux affaires européennes



For the Delegation of **Saint Helena, Ascension, Tristan da Cunha Islands**

The Honourable Mr. Lawson HENRY, Member of the Legislative Council



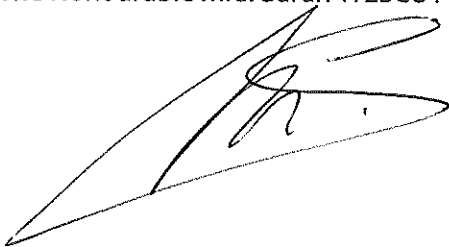
For the Delegation of **Saint-Pierre-and-Miquelon**

The Honourable Mr. Stéphane ARTANO, President of the Territorial Council




For the Delegation of **Sint Maarten**

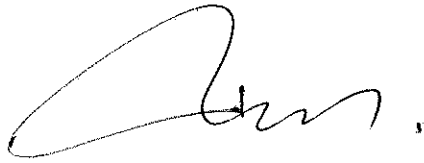
The Honourable Mrs. Sarah WESCOT-WILLIAMS, Prime Minister



For the Delegation of **St. Eustatius**

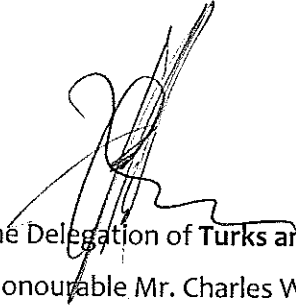
Mr. Carlyle TEARR, Commissioner of Economy and Infrastructure






For the Delegation of Territory of the **French Southern and Antarctic Lands**

Mr. Pascal BOLOT, Préfet, Administrateur supérieur



For the Delegation of **Turks and Caicos Islands**

The Honourable Mr. Charles WASHINGTON MISICK OBE, Minister of Finance, Trade and Investment



For the Delegation of **Wallis & Futuna**

Mr. Napole POLUTELE, Député