



OCTAssociation

**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 2009 Ministerial Conference  
in Brussels 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

The Undersigned representatives of the Governments of the Overseas Countries and Territories of the EU have met together in Brussels and having

**RECOGNISED**

That their generally small size, ecosystems and remote location constrain their economies and accentuate their vulnerability to natural disasters and economic changes.

That as Overseas Territories, they have been building relationships with their regional neighbours in an effort to overcome the unique challenges in accessing multilateral funding in order to lessen or eliminate constraints in areas in which they are particularly vulnerable, such as environment and trade.

That they are involved in a process of revision of the Overseas Association Decision, launched with the Green paper in 2008. The progress made in this process will be reported by the Commission to the Council by the end of 2010, and will allow some further and more detailed discussions on the various elements of the new Decision.

**CONFIRMED**

Their desire to strengthen a mutually beneficial, comprehensive and unique partnership with the European Union based on European citizenship and the concept of European family,

considering the diversity of the OCTs needs in terms of development aid and potential of cooperation, support a coherent framework with a differentiated approach.

Their need for sustainability of development both generally and institutionally.

Their need for careful assessment of their vulnerability to natural disasters and economic changes.

Their willingness to subscribe to international norms and standards, as well as principles of good governance, accountability and transparency and the need for this to be recognised by the Commission.

#### NOW RESOLVE THAT

##### 1. OCTA bureau

2 M€ allocation from the 10th regional EDF to enable OCTA to establish its own Bureau, following the discussions initiated in 2007 and thereafter the resolutions in 2008. Three experts and one assistant, under the direction of OCTA, will support the strengthening of the dialogue and cooperation between the OCTs and EU; the improvement of OCTs' administrative capacity to cooperate and interact with EU on an operational level, notably with regard to 10th EDF implementation issues, the access to EU horizontal programmes and thematic policies; the promotion and coordination of training and technical assistance to enhance and develop OCT capacity to interact with EU. The OCTs are actively involved in the design, the management and the sustainability of the Bureau. It is OCTA's ambition to implement the Bureau in 2010. The EDF allocation will fund this extended technical assistance on a three years period.

##### 2. Environment and Climate Change

Considering the outcomes of international climate talks, and the global consensus to dedicate specific and additional financing mechanisms to help vulnerable countries and islands to start financing adaptation programmes and clean development pathways, the OCTs recognize the need to have a long-term approach to address climate change and

related environmental issues. In spite of the recommendations of the *Conference on climate change and biodiversity in the EU overseas entities* in 2008, there are no provisions available for proper long-term actions. At the time of the revision of the biodiversity strategy by the EU and the EU climate agenda, it is proposed that a comprehensive partnership be developed between the OCTs and the EU in order to map the OCTs fragility in the face of climate change and their potential based on their biodiversity. Specific activities under the horizontal and community programmes which focus on these issues should be prepared in order to respond to the objectives of the Association.

### 3. Trade

In the context of enhancing their economic development in a global and regional context, the OCTs request the Commission to support OCTs competitiveness through its development, phyto sanitary and sanitary, transportation, and trade policies, by developing specific partnerships stimulating OCTs goods and services exports in order to achieve regional integration and maintain close links with the EU. The generalisation of their trade preferences to third countries is indeed leading to the erosion of their benefits under the Overseas Association Decision, in addition to the increasing intensity of global competition and the consequential increase in economic vulnerability that affect small islands in particular. The erosion of preferential treatment needs special focus and assessments, and the identification and implementation of all appropriate measures to alleviate its negative impacts on OCTs. The OCTs welcome the willingness of the Commission to explore OCT-specific rules of origin, towards more flexibility, as obtained by some ACP countries or permanent derogations. The OCTs also welcome the elements proposed for the future partnership with the EU. In parallel, the OCTs are committed to successfully implement the EDF thematic project on Territorial Strategies for Innovation to increase the value added of their products and services and better prepare to compete in the global economy. Furthermore some OCTs will aim towards becoming geo-strategic relevant centres of excellence. The OCTs would welcome Commission support for exploring mechanisms through the Partnership Working Party on Financial Services for recognising the international standards that exist in the OCTs and ensuring there are no unfair barriers to market access in the EU.



#### 4. Horizontal EU programs

OCTs are willing to further explore with the Commission the possibilities to benefit from a direct or indirect targeting in the horizontal EU programs such as the FP7 (“Capacities” program), as already demanded in the past political declarations, in Grenada in March 2010, and in accordance with the elements underlined in the 2009 EU communication.

#### 5. Partnership between the EU and the OCTs

In the context of the Commission’s efforts to publicise the Communication “elements for a new partnerships between the EU and the OCTs”, and in the light of the Council Conclusions, the OCTs request the Commission to continue to both dialogue and inform them of the relevant studies, process and timeline which will define the next steps. The OCTs remind the Commission and other stakeholders that they want to be actively involved over the next years in all steps and that a future partnership needs to be built on an equally, transparent and effective relation.

#### 6. Joint Position Paper

OCTA proposes to work jointly with the member states linked to OCTs toward the definition and presentation to the Commission of a joint position paper on the future of the EU-OCT partnership on the occasion of the next forum of dialogue. The chairman will report back to the Commission on the progress of this initiative.

#### 7. Equal treatment for all OCTs

The OCTs acknowledge the recent decision to take into consideration the additional costs experienced by the most isolated OCTs with the aim of facilitating the participation of OCTs at this forum. The OCTs request that this specific treatment becomes a fundamental pillar of an inclusive policy which will ensure that very isolated OCTs are not excluded from attending future workshops and Forums due to their travel and subsistence costs which by virtue of their location is disproportionately high.

## 8. OCTA strategic plan 2010

OCTA has to pursue its activity that will lead to sustainable development policies and show its willingness to reinforce coherent approaches covering economic development, environmental resilience, social and cultural promotion and cooperation. The 2010 strategic plan presenting the sustainable development pillars for the OCTs in their partnership with the EU is adopted by all the OCT governments present at the Ministerial conference.

## REFERENCE

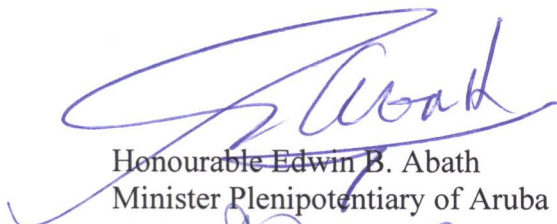
Signed in Brussels, this 24 of March 2010  
Fait à Bruxelles, le 24 Mars 2010

For the Delegation of **Anguilla**

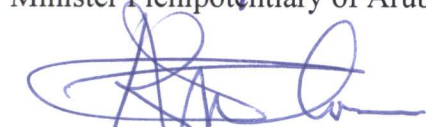


Honourable Hubert Hughes  
Chief Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Investment, Commerce and Tourism

For the Delegation of **Aruba**



Honourable Edwin B. Abath  
Minister Plenipotentiary of Aruba



For the Delegation of **British Virgin Islands**

Kedrick E. Malone Director, London Office  
Government of the British Virgin Islands

For the Delegation of **Cayman Islands**



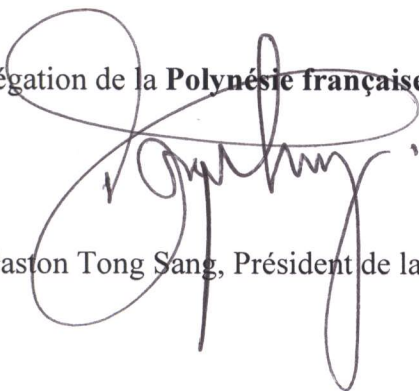
Dr Dax Basdeo, Acting Chief Officer, Ministry of Finance, Cayman Islands Government

For the Delegation of **Falkland Islands**



Mr Roger Edwards, Member of the Legislative Assembly

Pour la Délégation de la **Polynésie française**



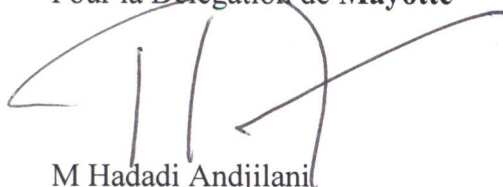
Monsieur Gaston Tong Sang, Président de la Polynésie française

For the Delegation of **Greenland**



Honourable Premier Kuupik Kleist

Pour la Délégation de **Mayotte**



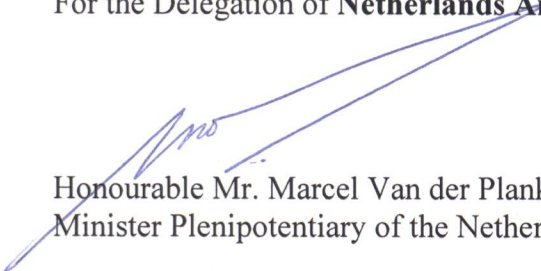
M Hadadi Andjilani  
Vice-président du Conseil Général

For the Delegation of **Montserrat**



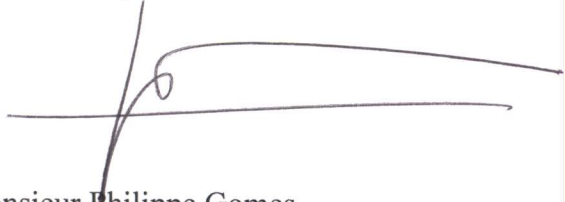
Honourable Mr. Reuben T. Meade  
Chief Minister of the Government of Montserrat and Minister Economic Development

For the Delegation of **Netherlands Antilles**



Honourable Mr. Marcel Van der Plank  
Minister Plenipotentiary of the Netherlands Antilles

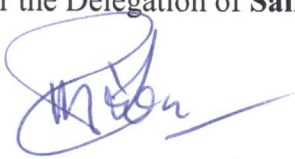
Pour la Délégation de **Nouvelle Calédonie**



Monsieur Philippe Gomes  
Président du gouvernement de la Nouvelle-Calédonie

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

For the Delegation of **Saint Helena**



Honourable Mervyn R. Yon  
Elected Member of the Executive Council

Pour la Délégation de **Saint Pierre & Miquelon**




M. Jean-Yves Desdouets  
Vice-président du Conseil Territorial de Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon

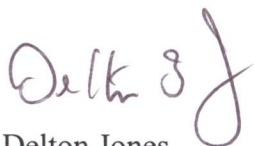


Pour la Délégation de **Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises**

M Rollon Mouchel-Blaisot  
Préfet, administrateur supérieur des TAAF

A stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Delton J' with a large, flowing 'J'.

Mr Delton Jones  
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Pour la Délégation de **Wallis & Futuna**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval. The signature itself is somewhat abstract, with a small 'M' visible at the end.

M Pesamino Taputai  
Vice président assemblée territoriale de Wallis & Futuna