PRESS RELEASE

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CARICOM Builds Consumer Protection Capacity

(CARICOM Secretariat, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana) The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat is ensuring that Member States are equipped to safeguard the health and safety of consumers.

With the support of the European Union’s 10th European Development Fund, its latest initiative is a Risk Assessment and Product Safety Training Workshop which opens Wednesday at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel in Jamaica. The 3-day workshop is hosted in collaboration with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Organization of American States (OAS) Consumer Safety and Health Network (CSHN). Approximately 30 participants from CARICOM Member States are expected to attend the training exercise. The opening ceremony will be attended by government officials and representatives of relevant agencies.

The workshop aims to strengthen the risk assessment and product safety capacity of the CARREX National Contact Points (NCPs) and Standards officers who will be operating the CARREX. CARREX is the CARICOM Rapid Alert System for the Exchange of Information on Dangerous (non-food) Consumer Goods. It will allow Member States to alert each other regarding unsafe items in the marketplace. The training exercise seeks to enhance the NCPs’ knowledge of risk assessment and product safety so that they can better detect and assess
potentially unsafe items on the market. This should facilitate the effective and efficient use of the CARREX at both the national and regional level. Topics that will be covered include risk analysis, consumer behaviour, market surveillance among others. There will also be a presentation on the CARREX and its operation. Resource persons are drawn from the United States CPSC, OAS and the CARICOM Secretariat.

In January, the Secretariat provided technical assistance and training to the Consumer Protection Commission of the Bahamas. Approximately 20 participants from the Commission, the Bureau of Standards and other relevant agencies received training on the model Consumer Protection Bill, best practices regarding complaints handling and consumer education. The CARREX was also presented and participants had the opportunity to have their questions about the system addressed.

END

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