

## **GREATER DATA COLLECTION NEEDED ON THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

**(CARICOM Secretariat, Greater Georgetown, Guyana) – The creation of a regional Creative/Cultural Industry Mapping Network and a Creative/Cultural Industry Research Centre, to increase and improve data collection on the region’s creative industries, was one of the main recommendations of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)-WIPO Experts Meeting on Creative Industries and Intellectual Property that was held on February 8-9 at the CARICOM Secretariat Headquarters in Georgetown.**

This recommendation was made in the context of discussions among regional and international experts in the creative industries and intellectual property, industry association representatives, statisticians and policymakers, which pointed to the need for more research in the creative sector to inform industry management, strategic planning and policy formulation. The Creative Industry Mapping Network is intended to serve as a clearinghouse for existing data collection by governments and industry associations in CARICOM Member States on creative/cultural industries such as music, festivals, fashion, media and theatre, as well as functions as the focal point for building greater capacity to collect and disseminate these data.

The importance of the creative sector to the Region’s sustainable development through job creation, diversification of the tourism product and the potential for significantly increasing exports of indigenous products and services from the region was highlighted. Reference was in this regard made to studies on the music industry in Jamaica. A recent study from Michael Witter, for instance, states that the earnings of the music industry were estimated at US\$ 60-100 million for the year 2000. This figure is based upon income from sales of recorded music estimated at US\$ 40-50 million and income from foreign tours, local concerts/festivals and other activities at US\$ 20-25 million. The study further states that in the year 2000, the gross revenues from entertainment related activities were approximately 10% of the GDP. The entertainment industry in Jamaica also provides direct employment and income for between 10,000 and 15,000 people<sup>1</sup>.

The Meeting also recommended that national surveys be conducted on the contribution of the creative industries to the economies of Member States, on the basis of established methodologies such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) Guide on Surveying the Economic Contribution of the Copyright-based Industries. Intellectual property rights protection and enhancement were also highlighted as critical to the development of the creative industries.

There is further a need for increased cooperation between statistical offices and the various stakeholders in the field of creative industries in the region, as well as a need for strengthening professional and industry associations at the national and regional levels.

The importance of cross-regional exchange on issues related to the mapping of creative industries was also highlighted and continued CARICOM-WIPO collaboration in the field of creative industries supported.

The development of cultural or creative industries in the Region and maximization of their contribution to the economy are among the main priorities for culture and development in the Caribbean Community. The CARICOM-WIPO Experts Meeting on Creative Industries and Intellectual Property is a follow-up to the regional workshops on Intellectual Property for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and SME Support Agencies which were held in July 2005 in Suriname, Saint Lucia and Jamaica. These workshops were a collaborative effort of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, Caribbean Export and WIPO and were focused on increasing the awareness and use of intellectual property among Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in order to enhance their competitiveness at the national, regional and international levels. The workshops confirmed the need among small and medium-sized enterprises, especially in the Creative Industries, for information on intellectual property.

A Creative Industries Division was recently established in WIPO in response to the growing interest and needs of the Member States of WIPO to address the economic developmental impact of intellectual property policies and practices on the creative industries. The main objective of the Division is to provide a focal point for related policy and industry discourse. The Division also focuses on collaborating with the traditional and non-traditional intellectual property stakeholders to advance the conceptualization of the creative industries. Its activities will include developing tools and conducting studies on the creative potential of countries, on assessing the economic contribution of creative activities, and assisting creative industries in benefiting from their intellectual property assets.

Also present at the experts meeting were representatives of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, Caribbean Export and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

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<sup>1</sup> Lloyd Stanbury: Mapping the Creative Industries – The Experience of Jamaica by Lloyd Stanbury, Caribbean Music Expo Limited, February 2006