

For Immediate Release

November 23, 2011

## **First Conference on regional integration of French Caribbean Departments**

**Forum DFA**, the first conference on regional integration of the French Departments in the Americas (DFA) will be held from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup> at U.A.G. (University of the French Antilles and French Guyana) at Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe, F.W.I.

The theme of the **Forum DFA** is not just about the regional integration of the French Departments in the Americas with the greater Caribbean region. "Today it necessary to redraw our borders and to engage in a dialogue with the continents to the North and the South, by learning about our history and by interrogating about the future of this melting pot of civilization and development; regional integration must be managed while protecting and favouring its rich diversity" according to Xavier d'Arthuys of the organizer's office in Paris.

"The French Caribbean has an important role to play and has to find a way to work with the other countries of the (English, Spanish and Dutch speaking) Caribbean to make their contribution to the economic development –through training, research & development and co-operation, as well as ecological development –through geopolitical dialogues- and artistic & cultural development of the region"

Numerous academics and professional experts from France, the French West Indies, Barbados, Cuba, Jamaica & Mexico will be participating in the 3-day conference, which will be inaugurated by Mr. Victorin Lurel, President of the Regional Council of Guadeloupe and Mr. Pascal Saffache, President U.A.G, as well as Ms. Marie-Luce Penchard, Minister of French Overseas Departments & Territories and Immigration.

The 3-day conference is held at the campus of Fouillole (Amphitheatre Le Pointe, Salle du Conseil & Salle L of the Faculty of Law) in Point-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe, where the University of the French Antilles & French Guyana is headquartered,

The Paris-based association Al'Chimie has been assigned by the commission '*L'année des Outre-Mer français 2011*' to organise **Forum DFA**, in partnership with the *Université Antilles Guyane* (University of the French Antilles & French Guyana), DRAC (French Regional Institute of Cultural Affairs) of Guadeloupe, and the French Embassy in St. Lucia.

For a copy of the conference programme and further information, please contact:

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## Footnotes:

### **DFA**

DFA stands for '**Départements français d'Amérique**', French Departments of the Americas, which include French Guyana, Guadeloupe and Martinique. These 3 overseas departments, together with the 2 overseas territories (St. Barthélemy and St. Martin), of the French Republic are classified as Ultra-Peripheral Regions (RUP) of the European Union.

### **2011 : Année des Outre-Mer**

The Overseas Departments & Territories have a specific place in France this year, as 2011 has been declared '**The Year of the Overseas [Regions]**', valuing them on a national level, marking their variety and bringing a less stigmatized image of these regions with their specific cultures, which are nevertheless bound by a common history and language. The vindication of their specific identities is highlighted through various events programmed in 2011 throughout France the French Overseas Departments & Territories.

### **Daniel Maximin, commissioner of "2011, Année des Outre-mer"**

The commissioner in charge of this event, Daniel Maximin, depicts since the 80ies a will of opening, sharing and integration of the French Departments in the Americas towards the greater Caribbean region; "[by] moving towards the continents of North and South America, a zone of exchanges between all the peoples of the greater Caribbean region is being established, following the example of the Mediterranean".

"In the search of a Caribbean identity and a common history, the interest towards the Caribbean is increasing. We come together through the love of music and sports. Events such as the Jazz Festival of St. Lucia or Jamaica, the Carifta Games [to name just a few] carry this imprint of Caribbean identity. Culture moves us closer and brings us together. By exceeding the identical barriers of language, we discover the possibility of sharing culture and wealth such as knowledge. The exchanges of people, languages, create this Caribbean unity today, which the DFA will have to embrace."

**Forum DFA** has been organized in response to the (re)quest of the Commission "2011: The Year of the Overseas [Regions]", to evaluate the academic and economic situation of the French Departments of the Americas. For the Commission and the Association Al'Chimie, the University of the French Antilles and French Guyana (U.A.G.) symbolizes the principle basis for education and advancement for young people of the DFA. U.A.G. has a determining role to play in forming of training and creating a labour pool. Not only in the DFA but also from the distribution of the DFA's output towards the other countries of the Caribbean. This creates an overall reflection on the integration of the DFA in the greater Caribbean region. Hence, the reason why U.A.G. has been placed at the heart of this conference, where it is also being hosted.

### **The Organizers**

The **association Al'Chimie**: originally founded in 2004 to favour cultural exchanges between Latin America & France, whereby through collaboration between cultural centres and festivals contact was made with Latin American artists. In 2011, however, Al'Chimie took a new turn by including from now on the Caribbean -including the French Departments of the Americas- as part of its activities, opening up to academic and economic themes.

The association appointed the services of the Paris based company Azul, through the persons of Xavier d' Arthuys and Katy Borie, who assure the design and organization of the programme and who manage the logistics of the conference. Xavier d' Arthuys, 'cultural engineer' and Caribbean specialist, in particular of the Hispanic Caribbean.