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Cort talks possible solutions with US

Monday January 21 2008

Minister of Finance and the Economy Dr. Errol Cort held wide ranging discussions on the Internet gaming dispute in Washington last Thursday with his ministerial counterpart from the Office of the US Trade Representative, Ambassador Susan Schwab.

"Clearly this is first and foremost about establishing lines of communication at the government-to-government level. Seen in that light, then, this initial round of discussions, while comprehensive, was intended to examine the universe of possible solutions to our mutual WTO dispute," Dr. Cort said.

"What must never get lost in the shuffle is the simple fact that our two countries have strong bilateral ties. My government is, therefore, committed to working with our US counterparts in finding an amicable settlement to this dispute, something two friendly governments can and should do," he added.



In December 2007, in response to a complaint from Antigua and Barbuda that the US was not in compliance with the rulings and recommendations of the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), a WTO Arbitration Panel ruled that Antigua and Barbuda could impose an annual level of nullification or impairment of benefits accruing to its dispute with the US in Internet gaming.

The WTO further ruled that it could request authorisation from the DSB, to suspend the obligations under the WTO Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, at a level not exceeding \$56.7 million (US\$21 million) annually.

Minister Cort was accompanied to the meeting by WTO Ambassador Dr. John W. Ashe and Antigua and Barbuda's Ambassador to the US Deborah-Mae Lovell.

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