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NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council

to: Delegations

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Subject: Council Conclusions on the Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy

At its meeting on 19 November 2012, the Council adopted the attached Council Conclusions on the Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy.

Council Conclusions on the Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy

1. The Council welcomes and endorses the attached Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy that has been developed on the basis of the decision of the May 2010 EU-CARIFORUM Summit in Madrid and was elaborated jointly by the EU and CARIFORUM countries. The Strategy allows the parties to intensify their cooperation in a number of core areas of mutual interest, namely: regional integration, reconstruction of Haiti, climate change and natural disasters, crime and security and joint action in multilateral fora.
2. The Council underlines the importance of the Caribbean in the EU's external action, in the framework of the partnership established in the Cotonou Agreement, taking duly into account the specificities of the region. It also recognizes the EU special links with the Outermost Regions (ORs) and the associated Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) in the Caribbean, whose successful integration in the region will enhance their role in promoting EU values. Moreover, the ORs and the OCTs can act as hubs or centres of excellence in their regions.
3. The Strategy reflects the shared commitment of CARIFORUM and the EU to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and in international law, including in particular the respect for and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality, the rule of law and democratic governance.
4. The Council recognizes the importance of the Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy in establishing a structured framework for broader and deeper political dialogue between the regions. The Strategy provides for effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms and will be financially supported as appropriate by existing instruments.
5. The Council notes that Member States fully endorse the Strategy within their sphere of competence.
6. The Council invites the EEAS and the Commission to report on progress in the implementation of the Strategy.

Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy

INTRODUCTION

At the May 2010 EU-CARIFORUM¹ Summit in Madrid, Heads of State and Government agreed to work on a Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy and identified five core areas for closer cooperation: regional integration, reconstruction of Haiti, climate change and natural disasters, crime and security and joint action in multilateral fora. Based on the outline agreed by Heads of State and Government in Madrid, the present document has been elaborated by a joint working group, including the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Commission services, and representatives of EU Member States and CARIFORUM countries.

The Caribbean and the EU share a long history, culture and a broad base of common values. Through its overseas regions, countries and territories, the EU is also physically part of the Caribbean and views the region as geopolitically important. Both regions share a commitment to global peace, progress and prosperity as well as to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. For the Caribbean, the EU has been and remains a reliable development partner, whose support has been important in the region's efforts towards sustainable development, including poverty eradication and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as regional integration.

¹ CARIFORUM membership includes all the CARICOM Member States, i.e. Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago (except Montserrat), and non-CARICOM members, i.e. the Dominican Republic and Cuba.

Relations are currently underpinned by the Cotonou Agreement, the CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, and the bi-regional political dialogue. These are complemented by other regional cooperation frameworks in which the Caribbean and the EU participate, such as the EU-Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Partnership. The Caribbean-EU Partnership is further enhanced by the unbroken ties that many Caribbean countries have with some EU MS and/or their overseas countries and territories (OCTs) and Outermost Regions (ORs) associated with the EU.

This Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy aims to rethink, reposition and refocus the partnership in order to maximise the benefits of the special bi-regional relationship. Furthermore, it aims to develop a new dimension to the relationship, allowing the Caribbean and EU nations to deepen dialogue and structure their cooperation in order to address together the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. It will continue to take account of the vulnerabilities and challenges facing the Caribbean States. The guiding principles for the Joint Strategy are joint ownership, mutual accountability, and solidarity, co-management and co-responsibility. It reflects the shared commitment of CARIFORUM and the EU to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and in international law, including in particular the respect for and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law and democratic governance.

The establishment of a structured framework for broader and deeper political dialogue is an important aspect of the process towards implementation of an enhanced political partnership strategy. The Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy includes effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms, which build on existing structures, and will be complementary to and coherent with other relevant partnership frameworks.

1. THEME I: REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN

1.1. OVERVIEW

There are considerable opportunities to expand growth in the Caribbean through trade, investment and tourism and by developing niche markets and other economic opportunities. However, there are also persistent challenges to overcome. Globalisation is a challenge to small, vulnerable developing states such as those in the Caribbean that are facing difficulties in their efforts to fully participate in a highly competitive global economy.

Regional integration and cooperation is considered one of the best means to facilitate human and social progress and sustainable long-term development in the Caribbean. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) are the two principal regional integration organisations. CARIFORUM facilitates wider regional cooperation as does the EU's association with its OCTs. The EU continues to be an active partner in supporting regional integration and cooperation, based on its own experience, in order to accelerate and streamline development goals in the Caribbean. The CARIFORUM-EU EPA builds a trade partnership for increased competitiveness, economic growth and development, supporting regional integration in the Caribbean and participation in the world trading system.

1.2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Caribbean and the EU share a commitment to economic growth and sustainable development through the promotion of regional integration and cooperation, which are particularly effective in addressing the vulnerabilities associated with a group of countries of predominantly small island states. Both sides have identified specific areas of strategic cooperation in support of deepened regional integration and cooperation. The areas of cooperation include but are not limited to:

- Strengthening regional integration and cooperation processes in the Caribbean region including with neighbouring EU overseas departments and territories, as well as neighbouring countries in Central and South America;

- Implementation of regional integration initiatives, such as the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the OECS Economic Union;
- Effective implementation of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA, with an emphasis on the opportunities it offers to economic operators in the Caribbean;
- Reducing the vulnerability and building the resilience of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) against external shocks;
- Fostering a healthy economic and investment climate in the Caribbean to enhance the integration of regional markets and competitiveness at the international level;
- The development of enterprise through private sector investments, particularly in the service sector, including financial services, tourism and the creative and cultural industries, and agro-business and manufacturing;
- Promotion of innovation, information and communication technology (ICT), and competition;
- The development of infrastructure networks to facilitate intra-regional and international trade;
- Energy diversification, interconnectivity and security;
- The promotion of green economic growth with specific support for efforts to preserve biodiversity, taking account of the importance of water resources, the tourism industry, and the agricultural and bio-research sectors;
- Education and skills development through training and cooperation in the area of science and technology;

- A regional approach to food security and health;
- The promotion of poverty alleviation, social cohesion, social dialogue, the development of civil society, including social partners, non-discrimination and gender equality, the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the promotion of the rule of law and democratic governance, the promotion of decent work and internationally recognized labour standards and the enhancement of youth involvement in national development.

1.3. JOINT ACTION

The Partners will pursue a long term programme of joint action focused on growth and sustainable development, and addressing common challenges, with particular emphasis on regional integration and cooperation.

Proposed joint actions include:

- An intensified and inclusive Caribbean-EU political and policy dialogue addressing issues of interest to both regions, and global challenges;
- Actions contributing to coherence among the various integration and cooperation arrangements involving the Caribbean, including the ACP-EU partnership, the EU-LAC cooperation mechanisms and the EU/OCT association;
- Actions contributing to deepening regional integration and cooperation, including the strengthening of the institutional capacities of regional organisations in the Caribbean and at the national level, in order to increase effective definition, implementation and sustained follow-up of policies at the regional level;
- Support to efforts of institutional consolidation at the regional and sub-regional levels;

- Programmes contributing to the effective implementation of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA, the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the OECS Economic Union as well as strengthening links between CARIFORUM and the EU's OCTs and ORs, particularly in areas of trade and energy;
- Actions contributing to the creation of a healthy economic and investment climate and fostering productive capacities in the Caribbean;
- Building the resilience and reducing the vulnerability of SIDS against external shocks;
- Development of industrial and export strategies;
- Research & Development and training in the areas of innovation, science and technology;
- Reinforcing competitiveness and the promotion of innovation;
- Regional business development, with particular emphasis on the development of regional SMEs;
- Energy, with particular emphasis on renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- Interconnectivity, including transport and information and communication technology;
- Contributing to the promotion of decent work and internationally recognised labour standards to support human development, social cohesion and economic growth;
- Contributing to the development of a Caribbean-wide framework for an effective regional health strategy;
- Work towards the development of a strategy on food security, quality and diversity in the Caribbean and making use of new technologies to improve productivity and competitiveness.

2. THEME II: RECONSTRUCTION AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TO HAITI

2.1. OVERVIEW

On 12 January 2010, the Republic of Haiti suffered one of the most devastating earthquakes in modern times. An estimated 250 thousand people lost their lives and 1.5 million were left in need of emergency shelter. The earthquake caused massive damage to social and economic infrastructure. It exacerbated the country's existing problems: poverty, insecurity, environmental degradation and vulnerability to disasters. The 2009 UN Human Development Index ranked Haiti 145 out of 162 countries.

Haiti has been prioritised within this Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy because of the magnitude of its needs. Lessons learnt, particularly in disaster risk reduction and reducing vulnerability, will also be relevant across the entire Caribbean region.

2.2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Haiti is on the road to recovering from its most urgent needs, thanks also to substantial EU and Caribbean humanitarian aid. However, the country still faces daunting reconstruction, economic, political and social challenges. Consolidating Haiti's democratic institutions, improving governance, reforming public administration and reducing poverty and social inequalities remain crucial tasks requiring sustained cooperation from the Caribbean and the EU. Such support, in coordination with other international donors, must be anchored in the national strategy and priorities of the Haitian Government. The National Reconstruction and Development Action Plan approved at the International Donors Conference in New York on 31 March 2010 lists specific goals based on four key pillars: territorial, economic, social, and institutional rebuilding.

There is also scope for enhancing Haiti's integration within the Caribbean regional context. The joint programming of the EDF will contribute to advancing Haiti's role in intra-Caribbean cooperation and foster increased participation in the regional integration process.

2.3. JOINT ACTION

CARIFORUM and EU proposed joint actions include:

- Coordinating actions in support of the reconstruction of Haiti, within existing donor coordination structures, and developing joint CARIFORUM-EU actions building on the joint EU programming for Haiti;
- Mobilising relevant cooperation instruments in the framework of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement and the EU-LAC process;
- Supporting the functioning and consolidation of Haitian democracy through the strengthening of institutional capacity-building of the Haitian public administration, free and credible elections, respect for human rights and the rule of law, judicial reforms, the strengthening of civil society, and the fight against corruption;
- Actions to ensure Haiti's full participation in the CARIFORUM-EU EPA and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), and other regional or bilateral Caribbean cooperation arrangements;
- Actions in the area of disaster preparedness and risk reduction strategies, including the development of mechanisms such as a regional building code to improve the capacity of the region to mitigate the effects of natural disasters in coordination with national risk reduction strategies, Haitian disaster preparedness plans and national mechanisms;
- Further developing risk transfer mechanisms and financing for risk reduction, such as the Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), and the application of best practices to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and other Caribbean-wide institutions specialising in disaster management;

- Facilitating cross border trade and investments and dialogue between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, inter alia through the strengthening of the Dominican-Haitian Mixed Bi-National Commission, so as to bolster socio-economic conditions and integration.

3. THEME III: CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL DISASTERS

3.1. OVERVIEW

Climate Change and its consequences are key obstacles to sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Caribbean countries are mostly Small Island Developing States with low-lying coastal zones and are particularly vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels threatening coastal communities, infrastructure and freshwater supplies. The increase in the temperature and acidity of sea water caused by greenhouse gases causes serious damage to coral reefs, leading to the weakening of coastal defences and the degradation of the region's marine biodiversity.

The very size of most Caribbean nations also makes them more vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters. A single hurricane can wipe out the economic base of an entire country, including infrastructure and all main sources of economic activity and income, putting additional strain on limited financial resources. The challenges are compounded by difficulties of distance and geography, which hamper the broadening and consolidation of their economic bases.

3.2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The CARIFORUM and the EU Member States, as signatories to the Kyoto Protocol, have worked together to advance climate change negotiations, and developed policies to reduce the impact of climate change and environmental degradation. They share an interest in achieving a comprehensive, fair and legally-binding outcome under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The CARIFORUM member states and the EU will continue their efforts to reach an ambitious international climate agreement.

Natural hazards such as hurricanes and earthquakes cannot be avoided, but steps can be taken to reduce risks and mitigate impacts by addressing the root causes of vulnerability and increasing capacity to cope with the consequences. Five priority areas have been identified for cooperation:

- Adapting to the effects of climate change without prejudice to achieving the Millennium Development Goals;
- Strengthening disaster prevention and risk reduction as well as enhancing monitoring, situation awareness, assessment and early warning systems for disaster management and response, and reducing deforestation through the sustainable management of forests;
- Promoting sustainable water management;
- Enhancing participation in the global carbon market through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM);
- Integrating climate change into poverty reduction efforts.

3.3. JOINT ACTION

CARIFORUM and EU proposed joint actions in this area, in line with the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) objectives, the EU-LAC Madrid Action Plan and CARICOM's Implementation Plan for Development of Resilience to Climate Change, include:

- Enhancing cooperation in international negotiations, including through regular consultations and joint initiatives to promote the successful conclusion of a post-2020 international climate agreement under the UNFCCC;

- Supporting a comprehensive approach to address climate change by prioritising adaptation and mitigation measures, in particular by providing access to renewable energy and energy efficiency and taking note of existing international initiatives in this regard, such as IRENA;
- Implementing policies that contribute to creating a green economy and a blue economy¹ as well as enhance collaboration to effect resilient growth and development;
- Creating positive interaction, working practices and outcomes between all actors in the LAC region, in light of the intensive maritime activity there;
- Enhancing the development of renewable power generation and grids on islands through a sharing of best practices and better international cooperation;
- Strengthening regional disaster and emergency response capacity, including civil protection mechanisms, with particular emphasis on adaptation, disaster risk reduction and interoperability, as well as monitoring, situation awareness and early warning systems. In this context, work will also be done to link short- and long-term actions;
- Strengthening sustainable water and forest management systems, including through sharing of best practices and through technical assistance;
- Mainstreaming climate change policies into national and regional development policies and strategies as well as into cooperation/partnership agreements;
- Ensuring that the particular vulnerabilities of SIDS and low-lying coastal countries remain high on the global development agenda, including in the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement and the EU-LAC process;

¹ A blue economy takes account of the ocean and coastal ecosystems and brings economic and social benefits that are efficient, equitable and sustainable.

- Encouraging a greater role for training, research & development and technology transfer and eco-innovation;
- Recognising the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development and working to support frameworks aimed at protecting its fragile ecosystems and unique biodiversity.

4. THEME IV: CRIME AND SECURITY

4.1. OVERVIEW

Transnational criminal activities and their potential impact on human security and the economy represent a growing concern for the Caribbean and the EU. The increase in such activities weakens the social fabric and generates gang violence and money laundering which distorts the economy and undermines sustainable development efforts. The Caribbean is a transit region for illicit drugs from South and Central America to Europe, North America and West Africa. The collateral damage of the drug trade is huge and takes an important toll on societies, fuels corruption, undermines the rule of law and leads to more organised crime. The economies of the Caribbean region, including the OCTs and ORs associated with the EU, rely largely on tourism and investment for development. Gains made in those sectors, which are inherently susceptible to external factors, risk being gradually eroded if crime and security go unchecked.

Areas of specific concern to the Caribbean and the EU include:

- The impact of criminal activities on human security in Caribbean societies;
- Illegal traffic and trade in small arms and light weapons;
- The proliferation of drugs trafficking and organised crime, as well as related crimes including gang violence and money laundering;

- Insufficient capacity for maritime and airspace border control;
- Fraud-related crimes, including money laundering as well as cyber crime, identity theft and copyright infringement;
- The social and security problems created by the deportation of criminals to the Caribbean;
- Trafficking in persons and kidnapping;
- Compliance with internationally-agreed standards in the financial sector.

4.2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Working together to fight criminal networks is a priority of the Joint Strategy. Strengthening cooperation and capacity building in areas such as policing, judicial processes, intelligence sharing and the promotion of compliance with internationally-agreed standards in the financial sector are key aspects in this regard. Equally, the root causes behind criminal activity and its social impact need to be addressed.

The "Panama Action Plan" of 1999, the San Jose agreement of 2003 and the priorities identified in the Port of Spain declaration of 2007 set out a range of priorities for common action with regards to crime and security. Caribbean-EU cooperation in the fight against drugs is conducted in the context of the EU-LAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs. Caribbean-EU cooperation in the fight against crime must also include cooperation with the relevant UN organisations, Interpol, OAS, Europol, IMPACS and other regional organisations, as well as with relevant hemispheric initiatives such as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

4.3. JOINT ACTION

CARIFORUM-EU security cooperation is based on the principles of shared responsibility and conformity with international law. It aims to develop integrated and balanced approaches.

CARIFORUM and EU proposed joint actions include:

- Pursuing a structured bi-regional policy dialogue building a coordinated and coherent approach to effectively build safe, secure and sustainable societies;
- Supporting the establishment of a region-wide strategy for addressing crime and insecurity, including drug trafficking, illicit trafficking in small arms, financial crime etc;
- Renewing efforts to implement the "Port of Spain Priorities" in the areas of control of the most vulnerable ports; intelligence sharing in precursor control;
- Programmes to address root causes of crime and delinquency and demand reduction;
- The promotion of cooperation and collaboration between the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) and partner institutions, and the promotion of and compliance with internationally-agreed standards of transparency and tax cooperation as well as increased coordination among international bodies, including the UNODC;
- Capacity building in border control management, including the exchange of experts and technical assistance;
- Fully implementing the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, with maritime cooperation as a priority area, including information sharing and further developing operational cooperation between interested actors in the Caribbean and EU Member States;

- Supporting capacity building of justice administrations and judicial reform in fighting transnational crime.

5. THEME V: JOINT ACTION IN BI-REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL FORA AND ON GLOBAL ISSUES

5.1. OVERVIEW

The Caribbean and the EU face a number of common challenges and concerns and are committed to act in a coordinated manner to find joint responses at the international level. Political dialogue and consultations are already taking place at different levels to tackle global issues in bi-regional and multilateral fora, as illustrated in climate change negotiations.

Together, the CARIFORUM and the EU represent 42 countries. Through more frequent consultations, better alignment of positions and strengthened coordination, the two regions could have a more decisive impact on topics of mutual importance, such as: promotion of human rights, democratic values and governance; reform of the United Nations and the international financial system and institutions; coordinated response to the global financial and economic crisis; attainment of the Millennium Development Goals; and the conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda.

5.2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The partners will strengthen dialogue on global issues to identify areas of cooperation, coordinate positions and jointly undertake specific initiatives and action. Both partners wish to promote and sustain a system of effective multilateralism, with strong, representative institutions. A higher degree of policy coordination and information exchange will allow for greater common impact in consultations and in sensitising third parties to issues of mutual concern.

The EU and CARIFORUM countries will aim to coordinate in multilateral institutions of which they are both members (UN, International Financial Institutions, WTO, etc.) and they will endeavour to take into account the interests and concerns of the other party in international groupings or organisations to which either partner belongs (G8, G20, Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), etc.).

5.3. JOINT ACTION

Through policy and political dialogue, the two regions will consult on topics of broader interest and identify possible common positions as well as joint efforts towards the implementation of shared priorities.

Proposed joint actions include:

- Working together on the promotion of human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance, including free and fair electoral processes, and combating corruption;
- Working together on promoting reform of the UN System, with the aim of enhancing its representativeness, transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, including the comprehensive reform of the Security Council;
- Development, whenever possible, of joint regional positions within the UN system and the International Financial Institutions and striving to support each other's initiatives;
- Contributing to the modernisation of the IMF and World Bank to, inter alia, better reflect the changing world economy through greater representation of dynamic emerging markets and developing countries;
- Addressing the challenges of structural reforms to strengthen regulation and oversight in the international regimes, i.e. the World Bank, IMF, the G8 and the G20, in order to boost and sustain global demand and foster job creation;

- Fostering bi-regional trade and growth through the mechanisms provided by the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the EPA;
- Developing instruments to build resilience including through the strengthening of financial and social safety nets, in order to help vulnerable countries better respond to and resist external shocks;
- In keeping with their commitment to a rules-based, multilateral trading system, regarding trade as a key engine for economic growth and development, the partners will pursue regular consultations and an active negotiating agenda at the multilateral level to engage in across-the-board negotiations to bring the Doha Development Round to a successful, ambitious, comprehensive and balanced conclusion, building on the progress achieved so far;
- Continue to support efforts to make developing countries, and in particular small and vulnerable economies, more competitive on a global scale.

6. IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES AND MONITORING MECHANISMS

6.1. IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

This partnership will involve, and be implemented by, a large number of institutional and non-institutional actors in the EU and in the Caribbean region at regional, national and local levels. Its effective implementation will be the shared responsibility of all CARIFORUM countries and EU Member States and institutions.

The identified joint action should be complementary to and pursued through the existing agreements, structures and instruments for cooperation between the Caribbean and the EU, in order to promote synergies and avoid duplication.

Civil society, non-state actors and parliaments have an important role in the implementation of the Joint Strategy and will be involved through an inclusive dialogue.

The implementation of the Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy will be financially supported as appropriate by existing instruments, such as the European Development Fund (EDF), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Caribbean Development Fund, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Instrument for Stability, the future Partnership Instrument and the Caribbean Investment Facility, or their successors, as well as by financial institutions, such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Caribbean Development Bank. Where relevant and possible, these instruments will be complemented by further contributions by CARIFORUM countries and EU Member States.

6.2. MONITORING MECHANISMS

The regular meetings of leaders from both regions (including all relevant representatives of EU and CARIFORUM institutions) will continue to provide political guidance to the partnership. These meetings will review progress, provide new orientations to the strategy and give instructions on the way forward, taking new global challenges and regional imperatives into consideration.

In addition to the political dialogue, a Joint CARIFORUM-EU Working Group based in Brussels will periodically monitor and evaluate progress against expected results, and make appropriate recommendations. This working group will consist of officials from the European External Action Service, the European Commission, CARIFORUM and EU Member States. Experts from the OCTs and Outermost Regions can be associated, where necessary. The working group will provide a progress report to leaders on a regular basis.