Intervention by Lue Véron on behalf of the European Commission
San Pedro Sula, 1 June 2009

Distinguished Minister, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for the opportunity and we are very grateful to Honduras and the people of San Pedro for their hospitality and the Secretary General for the impeccable organization of this General Assembly. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the San Jose Dialogue, between the European Union and Latin America, and the tenth anniversary of the Strategic Partnership between our two regions: two excellent reason to celebrate our continued coordinations at the bi-regional and international level. Within this framework, the European Commission continues to support cooperation based on deepening regional integration, the negotiation of Association Agreements, development cooperation and constant political dialogue.

In the spirit of celebrating our regions’ continuing strategic cooperation I would like to emphasize that the European Union (EU) is the biggest provider of development support to the region. This support amounts to over €2.6 billion for Latin America and almost €1 billion for the Caribbean per year.

In response to the economic crisis gripping Latin America and the World in general the EU intends to set up a Latin American Investment Facility in order to streamline earmarked funding for the region and leverage further loans to ensure there is no disruption to investments in Latin America and facilitate counter-cyclical investment spending in the region. It is expected that loans could be raised for implementation of some 2 billion Euros worth of investments.

In terms of Public Security, we applaud regional efforts such as the Strategy for Security in Central America signed by representatives of the regions’ governments at the end of 2007. The European Commission supports public security in Central America with €133 million in bilateral aid and intends to set up a € 12 million regional aid program by 2010.
The European Commission is looking forward to the next EU-LAC Summit to be held in Madrid under the Spanish Presidency. Preparations for the Summit are already underway and going smoothly.

I wish a very successful General Assembly,

Thank you.