

# Antigua receives boost in US Internet gambling dispute

The small island nation of Antigua and Barbuda has gained support from fellow members of the Caribbean Community (CariCom) economic bloc in its online gambling dispute with the US.

In June, the Caribbean nation filed suit in US District Court against America's Attorney General, Alberto Gonzales, the US Federal Trade Commission and the US Federal Reserve to stop the enforcement of the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA).

The Antiguan suit claimed formal annual trade sanctions of USD 3.4 billion for the nation's 80,000 citizens to offset losses to the islands' Internet gambling community and overall economy.

CariCom is a 15-member organisation created in 1973 to give small Caribbean nations trading leverage against larger markets. It is currently holding its 28th Heads Of Government conference in Barbados and has thrown its weight behind Antigua in calling on the American Government to respect a recent World Trade Organisation (WTO) ruling, which stated that UIGEA restricts access to foreign trade and should be brought in line with international trade agreements, a stance the United States is fighting.

"This matter has been fully ventilated at the conference and the position of CariCom is that Antigua and Barbuda should be fully supported by CariCom in this matter because it should have serious implications for the region going forward as we seek to develop the financial services sector in the region," said Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua.