GENEVA ¦ 22 January 2013 - The World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board, currently holding its 132nd session in Geneva, has appointed **Dr Carissa Etienne** as the **new Regional Director** for **WHO's Americas Region** (WHO/AMRO), following her nomination by the Regional Committee for the Americas in September 2012. Dr Etienne will take up her appointment for a five-year term on 1 February 2013, **succeeding** **Dr Mirta Roses Periago** of Argentina.

"I believe strongly that good health is rooted in equity, universality, solidarity and inclusiveness," said Dr Etienne in her acceptance speech. "I have learned that Universal Health Coverage is not only the best way to improve the health of every citizen in a country – but that it is entirely feasible."

Dr Etienne, from Dominica, holds degrees in medicine and surgery from the University of the West Indies as well as a master's in community health and an honorary diploma in public health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

In her native country she served twice as Chief Medical Officer (in 2000-2002 and 1995-1996), Director of Primary Health Care Services, Disaster Coordinator, and National Epidemiologist in the Ministry of Health. She also served as Coordinator of the National AIDS Programme, Chairperson of the National AIDS Committee, and Medical Director of the Princess Margaret Hospital, and was an Associate Professor at the Ross University School of Medicine.

From 2003-2008, Dr Etienne served as Assistant Director of the Pan American Health Organization, WHO's Regional Office for the Americas, and from 2008-2012 she was Assistant Director-General, Health Systems and Services, at WHO headquarters in Geneva.

In Geneva, Dr Etienne led efforts to renew primary health care (PHC) at the global level and to strengthen health systems based on PHC, promoting integration and improved functioning of health systems. She has also promoted policy directions to reduce health inequalities and advance health for all through universal coverage, people-centred care, the access to safe and effective medical products and technology, the integration of health into broader public policies, and inclusive and participatory health leadership.

The Regional Office for the Americas comprises 38 Member States stretching from the Arctic to the Tierra del Fuego: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia,

Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela. In addition, Puerto Rico is an Associate Member, while Spain and Portugal are Observer States in the Region.