



59TH MEETING OF THE OECS AUTHORITY

COMMUNIQUÉ

Fifty-Ninth Meeting of the OECS Authority

NIS Building

Kingstown

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Saturday 26th July, 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Fifty-Ninth Meeting of the OECS Authority was convened at National Insurance Services Building, St. Vincent and the Grenadines on July 26th, 2014 under the incoming Chairman - Honourable Roosevelt Skerritt, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica. Member States in attendance and representation of Heads of Government included Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Apologies were received from the Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis – Honourable Dr. Denzil Douglas - who was unable to attend due to protracted delays in air travel. Also in attendance was the Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), Sir K. Dwight Venner.

In the main, the Meeting focused on, inter alia:

- (a) The OECS Work Programme and Budget 2014 – 2015
- (b) Application by the French Caribbean Overseas Regions to the OECS
- (c) Establishment of the Eastern Caribbean Competition Commission
- (d) Report on the Inaugural Meeting of the Economic Affairs Council
- (e) OECS Assembly and Development Seminar
- (f) CARICOM/Canada Negotiations
- (g) Cuba

THE OECS WORK PROGRAMME AND BUDGET:

Heads of Government noted the comprehensive scope of the Annual Work Programme for fiscal year 2014 – 2015 which focuses on initiatives to strengthen partnerships and engagements, institutional efficiencies, sustainable growth and development, resource mobilization, and capacity building. Overall, Heads of Governments welcomed the initiatives presented to enhance efficiency in and reduce the cost of the operations of the OECS Commission.

Heads of Government welcomed proposals for the establishment of OECS IT intelligent institutions and the development of a robust ICT backbone in the OECS as essential transformational tools for enhancing the operations of the OECS integration process. The Authority instructed that a comprehensive study be done on the most energy efficient and cost effective modality for the operation of a regional Ferry Service including consideration of the involvement of the private sector. Options for the sustainable financing of the OECS Commission were considered by Heads of Government who agreed that a more in-depth analysis be conducted and the recommendations submitted to the meeting of the Authority scheduled for November 2014.

The OECS Authority approved the Annual Work Programme and Budget of the OECS Commission for the period July 2014 – June 2015 as presented.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN COMPETITION COMMISSION:

Heads of Government received a comprehensive presentation on the functions, powers and the options in respect of the structure and budget for the establishment and operations of an Eastern Caribbean Competition Commission. The Authority instructed OECS Commissioners to reconsider the proposal for the establishment of the Eastern Caribbean Competition Commission and to report on the recommendations at the 60th meeting of the Authority scheduled for November 2014.

APPLICATION BY THE FRENCH CARIBBEAN OVERSEAS REGIONS TO OECS:

Heads of Government noted the progress made to date on the ongoing negotiations with Martinique, the state of preparedness of Guadeloupe to commence negotiations, and the request of St. Martin for associate membership of the OECS.

The Authority expressed satisfaction with the progress made thus far with the negotiations in relation to Martinique's accession and underscored its interest in an early and successful conclusion to the negotiations. The Authority therefore agreed that the sixtieth (60th) meeting of the OECS Authority would be the occasion for signature of the Agreement admitting Martinique to Associate Membership of the OECS.

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL:

Heads of Government noted the recommendations emanating from the inaugural meeting of the Economic Affairs Council (EAC) inclusive of free movement of OECS citizens and free circulation of goods and services.

The Authority concluded that there is a need for the work of the EAC to transcend beyond a narrowly institutional remit and agreed that the mandate of the Economic Affairs Council should be widened to include ongoing review of trends and performance of OECS economies, as well as the continuous engagement of the wider OECS public on such important regional matters.

OECS ASSEMBLY AND DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR:

Heads of Government agreed that the second sitting of the OECS Assembly will be convened in early October 2014 and that the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union Eight-Point Stabilization and Growth Programme will be the substantive item for discussion.

Heads of Government further agreed that a Development Seminar will be convened prior to the sitting of the Assembly on the motion for discussion.

CANADA/CARICOM NEGOTIATIONS

Heads of Government received a detailed submission by the Trade sub-committee on External Trade Negotiations comprising OECS Commissioners and staff of the Commission. The submission covered a broad range of areas including services, investment, the movement of business persons, tariff liberalisation, labour, trade in alcoholic beverages, and monopolies and state enterprises.

The Authority noted, applauded and endorsed the seminal submission prepared by the sub-committee, as well as its efforts at widespread engagement of OECS stakeholders in shaping and establishing joint (OECS) negotiating stances to be pursued in the Canada – CARICOM Negotiations. The Authority also endorsed the approach taken in constituting a working group comprising Commissioners, experts from the OECS Commission, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and National Trade Ministries as a useful mechanism for shaping the OECS agenda on a range of subject areas in the future.

CUBA

The Authority took special note of the occasion of Cuba's National Day (July 26th) and paid tribute to the Government and people of Cuba for the steadfast solidarity and support extended to the Governments and people of OECS Member States over the years, and in particular, the invaluable assistance granted in the fields of health care, education and physical infrastructure.

The Authority reiterated expressions of solidarity toward the Government and people of Cuba and extended its best wishes for the future.

60TH MEETING OF THE OECS AUTHORITY

The sixtieth (60th) Meeting of the OECS Authority will be held in the Commonwealth of Dominica in November 2014.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Saturday 26th July, 2014