



COMMUNIQUÉ
61st MEETING OF THE OECS AUTHORITY
Radisson Grenada Beach Resort
Grande Anse, Grenada
Monday 29th June, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Opening Ceremony of the 61st Meeting of the OECS Authority took place at the Radisson Grenada Beach Resort on the 29th June, 2015 under the Chairmanship of Dr. the Rt Honourable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada and incoming Chair of the Authority. At the Opening Ceremony remarks were made by the Director General - Dr. Didacus Jules; Prime Minister of Grenada - Dr. the Rt Honourable Keith Mitchell; Professor Jean Crusol – Chairman of the Commission for Economic Affairs, representing the President of the Regional Council of Martinique; and Commissioner Felix Gregoire – representing the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica. Among the statements made, the central theme revolved around the commitment to being “joint heirs of the common regional space with a shared history and common vision who will continue to craft a common destiny so as to strengthen solidarity among all OECS Members States”.

Other Heads of Government or Representatives in attendance included:

Dr. the Honorable. Ralph Gonsalves	Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Honourable Gaston Browne	Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda
Her Excellency June Soomer	Commissioner, Saint Lucia
Murielle Lesales	Commissioner, Martinique

Heads of other OECS institutions or Representatives in attendance included the Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) – Justice Dame Janice Pereira, Director General of the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA) – Mr. Donald McPhail and Senior Director of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) – Ms. Laurel Bain, representing the Governor of ECCB.

Among the various items discussed, the Meeting focused mainly on:

- (a) Administrative Arrangements of the OECS Commission: Structure, Work Programme and Budget 2015/2016
- (b) The Work Programme and Budget of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court 2015/2016
- (c) OECS Health Development Agenda
- (d) Blacklisting of OECS Financial Services Sector
- (e) Way Forward on the Operationalisation of the OECS Single Economic Space
- (f) Expulsion of Dominicans of Haitian Descent
- (g) Guyana/Venezuela Situation

OECS COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The OECS Heads of Government received a report on the progress made on the restructuring of the OECS Commission and anticipates making a final decision on the new structure on or before the 62nd Authority Meeting in November 2015.

Heads of Government also considered the Annual Work Programme and Budget of the Commission of the Organisation for the fiscal year 2015 - 2016 in keeping with the mandate of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre and the new Strategic Priorities of the Organisation. The Meeting focused on the strategic interventions and operational services that will be undertaken and the required budgetary requirements to support these initiatives during the new fiscal year.

WORK PROGRAMME & BUDGET 2015-2016: EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT

OECS Heads of Government noted and approved the Work Programme and Budget of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court for the 2015 – 2016 fiscal year. The Meeting noted the submission of a Justice Project and agreed that a proposal be developed for the financial sustainability of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court.

OECS HEALTH DEVELOPMENT AGENDA – A CONCEPT NOTE

The OECS Authority noted the importance of a single OECS health space to protect the region's borders from the importation of diseases, to facilitate mutually supportive assistance among Member States and to benefit from the competitive advantages of Member States individually and collectively in areas relating to ICT, health financing, health insurance and pooled procurement. Consideration was given to the key roles that the OECS Commission play, in collaboration with other health Organisations such as PAHO, CARICOM/CARPHA and the national health authorities, in addressing the current priority public health issues (such as Ebola and Chikungunya) as well as in developing the health sector in the OECS. The Heads of Government, therefore, reaffirmed the principle of establishing an OECS Health Unit and its attendant Work Plan.

The Authority welcomed the commitment of Martinique in its support to advance the region's health agenda through, *inter alia*, the installation of a cyclotron (an advanced diagnostic equipment for Cancer treatment) to better detect and treat cancer among OECS nationals.

FINANCIAL SERVICES BLACKLISTING OF OECS MEMBER STATES

The OECS Authority categorically rejected the recent blacklisting by the European Union Commission of OECS Member States with regard to financial services and tax services. The Authority noted that the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**) is the globally recognized authority for assessing internationally agreed standards of transparency and exchange of information in the tax area.

Heads of Government further noted that Member States had executed the Tax Information Exchange Agreements as required by the Global Forum and having been assessed by this Forum had been found to be substantially in compliance with the standards. The Meeting therefore recommended a Communique be issued both at the OECS and CARICOM level to the EU Commission on Economic Affairs and Taxation to

vigorously refute the blacklisting of OECS Member States and pointing to the fact that all jurisdictions are in compliance with the standards established by the Global Forum of the OECD.

WAY FORWARD ON THE OPERATIONALISATION OF THE OECS SINGLE ECONOMIC SPACE

OECS Heads of Government noted the progress made in establishing a seamless economic space within the OECS without impediments in the implementation of the Economic Union. The Meeting considered the range of changes to be undertaken to operationalize the OECS single economic space.

The OECS Authority agreed that January 1st 2017 is the deadline date for the operationalization of the Free Circulation Regime (inclusive of Goods) within the OECS.

EXPLUSION OF DOMINICANS OF HAITIAN DESCENT

OECS Heads of Government reaffirmed their decision of “no deportation” of Dominicans of Haitian descent as was articulated at the recently concluded EU-CARIFORUM Mini-Summit held in Brussels on June 11th, 2015. The Authority took note of the agreement by the Dominican Republic to collaborate with CARIFORUM to establish international benchmarks in monitoring the progress on this matter.

The Authority also emphasized the responsibility of the Government of the Dominican Republic (DR) in ensuring that a climate of fear is not created by non-state entities in the DR that would lead to an exodus of Dominicans of Haitian descent.

GUYANA/VENEZUELA SITUATION

The Authority received a report on diplomatic interventions pursued by designated OECS Heads of Government that are expected to result in the lessening of tensions between Guyana and Venezuela and therefore lay the basis for fresh dialogue on the issue of concern to both parties. These matters will be ventilated at the 36th CARICOM Heads of Government meeting for consideration.

INFORMATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE: COP21 IN PARIS

OECS Heads of Government welcomed the initiatives of Martinique in supporting the region's participation in the upcoming 21st Conference of Parties (COP 21) scheduled to be held in Paris, France December 7 – 8, 2015. Specific reference was made to the Regional Climate Change Summit convened by the Regional Council of Martinique in May, 2015.

In addition, OECS Heads of Government noted the reaffirmation of Martinique to follow up with the French Government regarding the latter's commitment to establish a Caribbean Pavilion at COP 21.

NEXT AUTHORITY MEETING

The Authority agreed that the 62nd Meeting of the Authority will be held on November 18 – 19, 2015 and that the tentative venue is Dominica.