



COMMUNIQUÉ

63rd MEETING OF THE OECS AUTHORITY

OECS Commission

Saint Lucia

July 14, 2016

The Sixty-Third Meeting of the OECS Authority was convened on the 14th July 2016 at the OECS Commission under the incoming Chairmanship of the Dr. the Hon. Timothy Harris, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis. The Authority welcomed Dr. the Hon. Timothy Harris to the Chair

The OECS Heads of Government also and applauded the significant contribution of retiring Chairman, the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell, who is the Prime Minister of Grenada.

The Authority warmly welcomed the inaugural attendance of the Hon. Allen Chastanet, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia.

The 63rd Authority was convened, using for the first time video conferencing technology. All Member States were present with the exception of Martinique and Anguilla.

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

1. The OECS Commission Annual Work Plan and Budget
2. Assembly Matters
3. Budget of the Supreme Court

The OECS Director General delivered an update on the advancement of key initiatives in support of the strategic objectives of the Commission. These included and were not limited to, notable progress in the regional staffing and structure of the Commission to improve on its ability to fulfil its mandate, forging closer direct engagement with Martinique since its accession to Associate Membership of the OECS, the development of a strategic plan to guide the establishment of a Health Unit to deliver enhanced coordinated domestic and regional health outcomes, the implementation of a new statistics and data analysis regime utilizing Geographic Information Systems to inform improved policy and decision making, advancing the Rights contingent to Free Movement of Persons and the implementation of a Youth Strategy focused on the digital engagement of youth to address a range of adverse socio-economic indicators.

The Authority commenced proceedings noting the considerable progress being achieved by the Economic Union and reaffirmed their strong commitment to The Revised Treaty of Basseterre and the establishment of the Protocol as being particularly relevant to the economic, social and political advancement of the OECS.

1. The OECS Commission Annual Work Plan and Budget

The OECS Commission Annual Work Plan was presented to Heads for adoption which was subsequently approved. Heads noted the substantial progress made by the Commission in executing a more effective and results based Work Plan to fulfil the Commission's strategic priorities and mandate undergirded by the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Authority also noted the extensive work of the Commission in implementing long term strategies to reduce the fiscal burden on Member States through an organizational re-structure and observed in a climate of escalating costs, the almost cost neutral budget which was presented and subsequently adopted.

In discussing the establishment of a Health Unit, The Authority noted the opportunity for sharing best practice in health delivery. The Authority noted the advances made by St. Kitts and Nevis in collaborating with the World Pediatric Project to deliver free pediatric health care to its nationals as well as citizens of the OECS. Heads agreed that all Member States would collaborate on a study to investigate the viability of a National Health Insurance Scheme and take account of the lifesaving surgical services being provided by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to OECS citizens.

Heads reaffirmed their Treaty commitment to more closely coordinate positions in foreign policy and further agreed to rationalize Foreign and Diplomatic missions as a matter of urgency in an on-going effort to further reduce the fiscal burden on Member States. Heads agreed for the need to investigate cost saving measures including collaborating on the use of shared space and resources and joint foreign representation where practically possible.

2. Assembly Matters

Heads agreed to administrative arrangements for participation in the Assembly meeting. The Authority agreed to deliberate on a motion at the second sitting of the OECS Assembly responding to the effects of climate change in the OECS. Heads noted the effect of climate change on the region which has occasioned serious damage and destruction to property and infrastructure and the loss of life. Heads acknowledged the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change identifying the Caribbean as one of the most vulnerable regions to be threatened by climate change over the next thirty to fifty years. The Authority cited the St. George's Declaration (2006) which provides inter alia for the development of strategies and policies to address the effects of climate change on water resources management, land management and marine and resource management.

3. Budget of the Supreme Court

The Authority noted the commencement of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) Financial Year as being from July 1st and further, this date as askew to the

ECSC Law Year commencing September 1st. Heads acknowledged the operational and strategic benefits of aligning both the Financial and Law Year to commence on September 1st and subsequently approved the variation of date and revised budget to affect the change.

The sixty-fourth Authority meeting was agreed to be held in St. Kitts and Nevis on 16th and 17th November 2016.