



## **COMMUNIQUÉ**

### **66<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE OECS AUTHORITY**

**Beachcombers Hotel, St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

**October 23, 2018**

The Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the OECS Authority was held at the Beachcombers Hotel, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, under the Chairmanship of Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Heads of Government and Representatives of Government in attendance included:

- Honourable Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda;
- Honourable Francine Baron, Minister of Foreign Affairs and CARICOM Affairs, Commonwealth of Dominica (representing Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, Dr. the Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit);
- Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada;
- Dr. the Honourable Timothy Harris, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis; and
- Honourable Allen Chastanet, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia.

Dr. Didacus Jules, Director General of the OECS, and the following Commissioners were also in attendance:

- Ambassador Colin Murdoch, Commissioner to the OECS for Antigua and Barbuda;
- Ms. Cathisha Williams, Commissioner to the OECS for Grenada;
- Ambassador Lionel Sydney Osborne, Commissioner to the OECS for St. Kitts and Nevis;
- Ambassador Elma Gene Isaac, Commissioner to the OECS for Saint Lucia; and
- Ambassador Alan Alexander, Commissioner to the OECS for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The OECS Member States of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Martinique and Montserrat were not represented on account of prior urgencies.

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

- (a) Joint Strategic Diplomatic Representation
- (b) Citizenship by Investment
- (c) Climate Resilience
- (d) Civil Aviation and Air Services
- (e) Increased Higher Education Access
- (f) Support and Financing of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court

#### **(A) JOINT STRATEGIC DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION**

OECS Heads of Government deliberated extensively on matters of foreign affairs and joint representation. The Authority continued discussions of strategic representation on the African Continent and took decisions to appoint non-resident ambassadors in the countries of Nigeria; South Africa; Egypt; Algeria; and Ethiopia, at the African Union in Addis Ababa. The Meeting also committed to the establishment of a permanent resident mission in the Kingdom of Morocco.

Heads of Government reaffirmed the decision to reopen joint diplomatic representation in Ottawa, Canada and considered the shared interests of Barbados in this joint venture. The Meeting mandated that the Chairman and Director General of the OECS Commission consult with the Prime Minister of Barbados, Honourable Mia Mottley, on this matter.

#### **(B) CITIZENSHIP BY INVESTMENT**

The Authority received a report from OECS Ambassador-designate to Brussels, Sharlene Shillingford-McKlmon, which inter alia addressed the recent statement by the Organisation for

Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Citizenship by Investment (CBI) and Residency by Investment (RBI) Programmes.

The Heads engaged in extensive discussions on the matter, noting the unreasonableness of the OECD position, and resolved to undertake comprehensive reviews of the respective CBI and RBI Programmes to ensure that areas where they may be limitations are identified and strengthened.

### **(C) CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

The Meeting received a presentation from Capricorn Investment Group on matters of climate-ready investment. Heads of Government were briefed on cutting edge investment and opportunities in the areas of transportation and energy, and reviewed market trends in this sector for the near future.

### **(D) CIVIL AVIATION AND AIR SERVICES**

The Authority received an update from the Director General of the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority (ECCAA), Donald McPhail, which indicated outstanding areas of improvement ahead of the scheduled 2019 audit by the International Civil Aviation Authority.

### **(E) INCREASED HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS**

The Heads of Government received a presentation from Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice Chancellor of The University of the West Indies (UWI), on the possible establishment of a fourth physical campus in Antigua and Barbuda. The Meeting considered the proposal with an agreement to review the documentation presented by the appointed taskforce currently assessing the feasibility of the venture. Heads of Government further discussed the improved academic relationship between The UWI and the community colleges within the OECS Member States.

### **(F) SUPPORT AND FINANCING OF THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT**

The Meeting deliberated on the sustainable financing of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court (ECSC) and considered the possibility of establishing a trust fund for the Court, an approach that was adopted for the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). Heads of Government authorised the Chairman and Director General of the OECS Commission to engage a consultant to further investigate the viability of the new approach.

The Authority received the 2017-2018 financial end of year reports for the OECS Commission and the OECS Assembly. The Meeting also engaged in further discussions on reports from the Council of Ministers on matters of Social Development, Foreign Affairs, Environmental Sustainability and Tourism.

All Heads expressed their deep appreciation of the hospitality extended by the Government and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and looked forward to the prompt implementation of decisions made at the meeting.