



**60TH MEETING OF THE OECS AUTHORITY  
COMMUNIQUÉ  
Sixtieth Meeting of the OECS Authority  
L'Hotel la Bateliere  
Schoelcher, Martinique  
Thursday 05th February, 2015**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Sixtieth Meeting of the OECS Authority which was convened at the L'hotel la Bateliere, Schoelcher, Martinique, on Wednesday 04 and Thursday 05<sup>th</sup> February 2015 under the current Chairman - Honourable Roosevelt Skerritt, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica was a transcendental moment in the journey of the OECS to integration.

Member States in attendance and representation of Heads of Government included:

- Honourable Charles Fernandez, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Antigua and Barbuda;
- Honourable Clarice Modeste-Curwen (MD), Minister for Foreign Affairs, Grenada;
- Honourable Kenny Anthony (PhD), Prime Minister of Saint Lucia;
- Honourable Ralph Gonsalves (PhD), Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
- Honourable Orlando Smith (MD), Premier, of the British Virgin Islands;
- Honourable Hubert Hughes, Chief Minister of Anguilla; and
- President Serge Letchimy, Regional Council of Martinique

Also in attendance were:

- Didacus Jules (PhD), Director General, OECS Commission;
- Ambassador Irwin Larocque, CARICOM Secretary General; and
- Ms Laurel Bain, Senior Director, Eastern Caribbean Central Bank

The highlight of the Opening Ceremony was the formal signing of documents initiating the accession to Associate Membership of Martinique by President Letchimy and the Chairman of the OECS Prime Minister Skerritt. Immediately after the signing, President Letchimy was escorted to the seat of Martinique at the Authority and in an historic and symbolic moment, the Standard of the Regional Council of Martinique was placed among the rainbow of OECS Flags.

The formal opening heard addresses from the Director General of the OECS Dr. Didacus Jules, the Chairman of the Authority Hon. Roosevelt Skerritt, and received an inspiring call to action from President Letchimy filled with proposals for immediate concretization of the promise of collaboration between Martinique and the OECS.

OECS Heads congratulated Martinique for the extraordinary homecoming provided by Martinique and the effusive hospitality and professionalism of its people throughout the hosting of this Meeting.

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

1. Advancement of the Economic Union
2. Sustainable Financing of the OECS Commission
3. Eastern Caribbean Competition Commission
4. OECS "Carve Out" in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas
5. Trade and Integration Matters
6. International Financial Services in the OECS
7. Free Circulation of Goods – Update
8. Governance of Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority

## **1. ADVANCEMENT OF THE OECS ECONOMIC UNION**

The OECS Authority engaged in comprehensive discussions on the further advancement of the OECS Economic Union. OECS Heads recognised the escalating demand for greater administrative, security and other border arrangements touching and concerning international trade, and the related financial burden being placed on Member States. Accordingly, OECS Heads agreed to introduce fiscal measures to cover the cost of these services rendered by Member States of the OECS Economic Union. The particular measure is to be left to the discretion of each Member State.

## **2. OPTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCING OF THE OECS**

OECS Heads of Government mooted and endorsed options for sustainable financing of the Commission. Heads agreed that these financing modalities will be introduced along with enhanced accountability requirements including performance measurement.

The Meeting noted that the recently convened meeting of OECS Institutions is in keeping with the attempt to rationalize the provision of services and to ensure value for money in the sustainable financing of these institutions.

### **3. EASTERN CARIBBEAN COMPETITION COMMISSION (ECCC)**

The Authority mooted a proposal on the establishment of the Eastern Caribbean Competition Commission to (strengthen the competitiveness framework among OECS countries) address matters related to anti-competitive business conduct. Considering the need to rationalize resources and institutions with those of CARICOM, OECS Heads mandated that further work be undertaken to consider options for possibly conferring the CARICOM Competition Commission the functions and powers previously envisaged for the East Caribbean Competition Commission.

OECS Heads mandated the conduct of technical and legal work on this matter ahead of the upcoming 26th inter-sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, February 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 2015 in the Bahamas.

### **4. OECS "CARVE OUT" IN THE REVISED TREATY OF CHAGUARAMAS**

OECS Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the CARICOM integration process while recognising that the OECS Economic Union was proceeding at a faster pace in areas such as, freedom of movement of persons, functional cooperation, and increasingly free circulation of goods. Accordingly, the Authority agreed that seeking amendments to the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to incorporate the aspirations of the OECS economic union as contained in the Revised Treaty of Basseterre (RTB) formed an important and indispensable element of the regional integration process.

OECS Heads agreed that there were no remaining substantive issues which precluded agreement of the amendments proposed to them by the OECS Commission. The Authority therefore anticipates the approval of these amendments at the upcoming 26th inter-sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, February 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> 2015 in the Bahamas.

### **5. TRADE AND INTEGRATION MATTERS**

The OECS Heads recognised the benefits of supra-nationality provided by Article 14 of The Revised Treaty of Basseterre and the dividends which this governance model was already delivering in areas such as Trade Policy. In this regard, the Authority reaffirmed its commitment to a transparent rules-based international trading system. Heads of Government expressed their concern with the slow pace of the Doha Development round of WTO negotiations.

The Authority expressed its consternation with the non-compliance by the United States with successive rulings of the Dispute settlement body of the WTO especially in relation to the gaming dispute with Antigua and Barbuda. OECS Heads urged the United States to make greater effort at arriving at a settlement during upcoming negotiations with Antigua and Barbuda.

OECS Heads discussed and adjusted the position of the OECS Economic Union in the negotiations with Canada, provided the OECS Commission with additional flexibility to conclude a Final CARICOM Closing Package which responds favourably to Canada.

OECS Heads also expressed a strong desire to benefit from enhanced access to the Canadian market through temporary entry for service providers such as health care-workers among others.

## **6. INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES IN THE OECS**

The OECS Authority recognized the current and emerging standards of regulation and compliance with respect to financial services and the need to strengthen the global financial system to stem the tide of criminality across national and international borders. The Authority embraces these efforts and in particular, called for the equal application of standards across the board and to all countries and territories thereby ensuring a level playing field.

The Caribbean region has generally and traditionally been a leader in the innovation, development and promotion of well-regulated financial services business and in that respect, the Authority recognizes and encourages the efforts of some of our members to strengthen their laws and systems to continue their leadership in this sector of the regional economy.

The Authority therefore calls on the international community to be inclusive in their development and application of standards that affect our members. The Authority therefore encourages the adoption of rules and processes that are of equal universal application which do not create unfair disadvantage or potentially damaging impacts on our economies and the livelihoods of our people.

#### **7. FREE CIRCULATION OF GOODS – UPDATE**

Heads of Government received a report from the Chairman of the Task force on Free Circulation of Goods within the OECS Economic Union. Presently, the work of the Task Force is facilitated by Compete Caribbean, which has provided funding for some critical activities including the confirmation of a technical coordinator to support the effective operation of the Economic Union through the establishment and implementation of a regime for the Free Circulation of Goods.

#### **8. GOVERNANCE OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY**

The Heads mandated that the board meeting of the ECCAA should be convened at the earliest opportunity.

#### **9. MODALITIES OF ENGAGEMENT OF MARTINIQUE WITH THE OECS COMMISSION**

The President of the Regional Council of Martinique informed the Meeting of various areas for cooperation and partnership, inclusive of but not limited to: health (centers of excellence), education (technical and vocational, and student exchange), and climate change. The Meeting agreed that the OECS-Martinique engagement will be a win-win engagement guided by protocols approved by both parties.

The Meeting noted that the OECS will be invited to attend a preparatory meeting (tentatively scheduled for May 2015) which will be convened in Martinique prior to the Paris COP 21 Summit scheduled for December 2015.

The OECS Director General informed the Meeting that the Commission has made arrangements to provide for office space to Martinique's permanent representative at its Headquarters in Saint Lucia. This arrangement will facilitate efficiency in the enhanced cooperation between OECS Member States and Martinique.

## **9. OTHER**

### **(a) Commendation**

Heads of Government commended President Serge Letchimy on his inaugural speech made during the Opening Ceremony and recommended that the speech be translated in English for publication and wide circulation of same.

The Meeting noted that elements of the speech will be incorporated as part of the work to be done by the Economic Affairs Council (EAC) given that there were concrete proposals for pursuing joint initiatives.

### **(b) Recognition and Gratitude**

The Heads expressed deep appreciation to Chief Minister Hubert Hughes on account of his dedicated service to the region and his consistent championing of the right to self-determination, as he prepares to retire from electoral office after more than 50 years of struggle.

The Authority expressed its gratitude to the Chief Minister for his invaluable contribution to advancing the work of the OECS in general since Anguilla became an Associate Member of the Organisation.

### **(c) Condolences**

OECS Heads of Government conferred on St. Vincent and the Grenadines their heartfelt condolences regarding the tragic accident in Rock Gutter in which several young people lost their lives.

## **61<sup>st</sup> MEETING OF THE OECS AUTHORITY**

The sixty first Meeting of the OECS Authority will be held in Grenada during the month of May 2015.