



# COMMUNIQUÉ

## 64<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE OECS AUTHORITY

### St. Kitts and Nevis

March 3, 2017

All Member States were represented at the Sixty-Fourth Meeting of the OECS Authority, which took place at the St. Kitts Marriott Resort on March 3rd 2017, under the Chairmanship of Dr. the Honourable Timothy Harris, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis.

The Meeting was preceded by an Opening Ceremony where remarks were made by the Chairman; the Director General of the OECS Commission, Dr. Didacus Jules; Prime Minister of St. Lucia, Honourable Allen Chastanet; and President of the Territorial Authority of Martinique, His Excellency Alfred Marie-Jeanne.

Among the statements made, the central theme revolved around “collective positioning in a world in which all grounds are shifting, all alliances are fluid, and the old certainties have become the new unpredictable.”

Dignitaries in attendance included the Governor General of St. Kitts and Nevis, Sir Tapley Seaton; Former Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis, Dr. The Rt Excellent and Rt. Hon. Sir. Kennedy A. Simmonds; and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Among the various items proposed for discussion, the Meeting focused mainly on:

- (a) The changing global environment
- (b) External representation
- (c) Non-independent and associate member states
- (d) Applications for membership
- (e) Capacity and modus operandi of the Commission

Other items proposed on the agenda such as Health Insurance; Civil aviation and air services; Agriculture and support services (regional transport); The Blue Economy; Climate Change and sustainable land management; and Security and Sustainable financing, were deferred for a subsequent meeting. The Authority agreed that this would allow an opportunity for deep discussion by, and with, heads in relation to these matters of concern for the OECS.

## **THE CHANGING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT**

The OECS Heads of Government deliberated extensively on the current global atmosphere, the inevitable exit of Great Britain from the European Union (Brexit) and the new, and very different, administration in the United States. Heads of Government agreed that the current situation requires a strategic approach to accelerate the integration process through convergence of efforts and a stronger bond of unity, solidarity, and fixed purpose.

## **EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION**

The Authority noted the need to strengthen the external presence of the OECS in some significant locations, such as the Mission in Brussels and the Economic Mission in Geneva. The meeting focused on the parameters of strategic collaboration and ways of sharing resources, such as diplomatic representation, to ensure that the region has a more powerful voice in these critical arenas. Heads of Government noted that following Brexit, it will be necessary to have a strong presence in Britain and an equally strong presence in the European Union, which is a major source of support to the region.

## **NON-INDEPENDENT AND ASSOCIATE MEMBER STATES**

OECS Heads of Government outlined the importance of establishing a synergy between independent and non-independent Member States of the Organisation to ensure that members are working together, and that the interests of non-independent states are championed and supported by the independent states and vice versa. The Authority also noted that, with the accession of Martinique and the potential of St. Martin and Guadeloupe joining as Member States, the number non-independent members has become significant. The Heads of Government agreed to discuss this matter further at the next Authority Meeting.

## **APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

The OECS Authority received a report on the status of negotiations with territories in the Eastern Caribbean who have expressed a desire to join the OECS. Heads of Government also considered the formal application for membership submitted by Guadeloupe and noted the advanced stage of negotiations with St. Martin towards membership.

## **CAPACITY AND MODUS OPERANDI OF THE COMMISSION**

OECS Heads of Government critically examined the capacity of the OECS Commission and its modus operandi, with a view to ensuring the Commission is flexible and responsive to the current international environment. The Authority expressed concerns on certain modalities of

work and provided very distinct guidance with respect to the institutional nimbleness expected of the Commission in these challenging times. The Meeting focused on the need to address issues that are closely aligned to the Revised Treaty of Basseterre, such as the free movement of people and the free circulation of goods and capital. The Authority also noted that the nimbleness with which the Commission operates also applies to other organs of OECS integration such as the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, to ensure a seamless realisation of common objectives.

#### **NEXT AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Authority agreed that the 64<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Authority will be concluded on April 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 in St. Vincent & the Grenadines.