



ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES

REMARKS BY DR. LEN ISHMAEL

at the Accreditation of His Excellence Gerardo Lozano Arredondo
Ambassador of Mexico to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States



August 12, 2009, Saint Lucia

REMARKS BY DIRECTOR GENERAL
AT THE ACCREDITATION OF
HIS EXCELLENCE GERARDO LOZANO ARREDONDO,
AMBASSADOR OF MEXICO TO THE ORGANISATION
OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES, OECS

AUGUST 12, 2009

Excellency,

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you to the OECS Secretariat, and to receive from you letters accrediting you as Ambassador of the United Mexican States to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States.

This presentation ceremony is truly historic, as it marks the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between Mexico and the OECS as a regional grouping of sovereign states in parallel with existing bilateral relations with those same states. It also signals a welcome recognition by the Government of Mexico of the unique and legally distinct character of the OECS within the wider Caribbean family.

In taking this step, Mexico has joined a growing list of countries that have become so impressed with the achievements of the OECS that they feel compelled to enter into a closer relationship with the Organisation. Just recently we received the credentials of the Ambassador of Spain to the OECS; other countries in Europe - members of the European Union and others - have indicated interest in pursuing closer relations with the OECS at a regional level; Brazil has opened a Mission to the OECS; Venezuela has announced the establishment of a special ambassadorial envoy to the OECS; Trinidad and Tobago has indicated interest in merging its economy with that

of the OECS, while others which shall not be named for the time being, have indicated interest in becoming members of the OECS.

Mexico's establishment of relations with the OECS at ambassadorial level suggests to us a growing confidence in the future of the OECS. This is certainly most heartening, as we are currently embarked upon an initiative which bears the most profound implications for our future. The initiative that I speak of is the establishment of an economic union, the arrangements for which (including a new Treaty) are to be finalized by the end of this year. I look forward to engaging you, Excellency, in discussions on the OECS Economic Union, including a possible role for Mexico in its realization.

In accepting your letter of credence, we look forward to building upon the excellent relations which have existed to date between Mexico and the individual Member States of the OECS. In the last few years the Member States of the OECS have benefited significantly from bilateral programmes of assistance implemented by the Government of Mexico in a wide range of areas including marine/coastal management, cadastral management, forestry management, agricultural diversification, information technology management, civil protection, and primary health care. Scores of students from the OECS have benefited from scholarships to pursue university level training in Mexico under its **Special Scholarship Programme for the English Speaking Caribbean for Bachelor and Postgraduate Studies**. In 2006 alone, some 198 students from six Member States of the OECS were studying in Mexican universities. OECS Member States have also benefited from capacity building programmes implemented by Mexico at the Caricom level in such fields as disaster management, international negotiations, tax policy and regional statistics.

It would be remiss of me Excellency, if I did not place on record, the deep appreciation of the Governments and people of the OECS for the significant contribution which has been made to date by Mexico to the development of the OECS. I humbly request that you convey those sentiments to your Government on our behalf.

As Mexico's first Ambassador to the OECS, you would have been charged by your Government with the signal responsibility of charting the course, and laying the foundation for a long lasting relationship through which the welfare of the people of Mexico and the OECS can be enhanced. I wish to assure the Government of Mexico, through you, that we are fully committed to deepening and strengthening the relations which we have just established.

I also wish to assure you personally, of our fullest support during your tenure as Ambassador to the OECS. I look forward eagerly to working with you in promoting and strengthening OECS - Mexico relations, and wish you every success in your new capacity as Ambassador of the United Mexican States to the OECS.

Welcome once again, to the OECS and the OECS Secretariat.