



ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES

Morne Fortuné, P.O. Box 179, Castries, St. Lucia

Telephone: (758) 455- 6327 Fax: (758) 453-1628 E-mail: oesec@oecs.org

COMMUNIQUE

OECS Economic Union Retreat

13 October 2007

St. Kitts

INTRODUCTION

Heads of Government of OECS Member States (The Authority) held a Retreat on the OECS Economic Union initiative with members of the Economic Union Task Force and staff of the OECS Secretariat at the Bernice White Lecture Room, ECCB Headquarters, St. Kitts on 13th October 2007, under the chairmanship of the Hon. Roosevelt Skerit, Prime Minister of Dominica and current Chairman of the OECS.

Other Heads of Government in attendance were:

The Hon. Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

Dr. the Hon. Lowell Lewis, Chief Minister of Montserrat

Dr. the Hon Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of St. Kitts and Nevis

The Hon. Stephenson King, Prime Minister of St. Lucia

Dr. the Hon. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

The Retreat's Purpose

The purpose of the Retreat was to get the total and full commitment of Heads to the decision taken in 2001, to establish an OECS Economic Union.

All Heads indicated that they were fully committed to the establishment of the Economic Union and that the programme of public education and consultation should begin immediately and involve



Opposition parties, national Cabinets, parliaments and all sections of the public i.e. the public and private sectors and all of civil society.

Heads used the opportunity to review the progress made and achievements realized after 25 years of cooperation among Member States. Accordingly they are making available for public discussion and dialogue their views on the way forward for the OECS in the challenging circumstances of the 21st century. The draft treaty and accompanying documents are merely ideas to inform the public dialogue and to invite extensive public participation.

Public Education

Heads agreed that the draft treaty on OECS Economic Union should be printed and distributed throughout Member States to enable a comprehensive discussion on the substance of Economic Union and to facilitate the fullest possible support for the initiative to deepen OECS integration. Heads would themselves be actively and constructively involved in the public education programme.

The Authority agreed that as part of the process of public education focal groups would be established at the national level to facilitate discussion and garner support. To facilitate the process of public education a booklet of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) would be prepared and circulated, as well as a publication entitled “Achievements to Date” documenting the work of the OECS over the past 26 years.

Technical Follow-up

Heads agreed that technical work was needed in a number of areas to identify the real issues, for example in relation to labour and manpower flows to determine how OECS skills can be absorbed and jobs generated.

Heads agreed that the capacity of the Economic Union Project Unit at the Secretariat should be enhanced to facilitate effective implementation of the work programme on Economic Union.

Heads emphasized the importance of ensuring that appropriate administrative mechanisms were put in place and effective linkages established between national and regional bodies.



Working Groups

The Authority agreed that a number of Working Groups including a Transition Group would be established to advance the process of effective implementation of Economic Union. Areas such as Foreign Affairs and the proposed Commission which will replace the existing Secretariat would be addressed by the Working Groups.

Main Organs

Heads agreed that the Authority, the Economic Affairs Council., the Monetary, Council, Ministerial Councils e.g. education and health, the Regional Assembly, the Commission, and special units located in the prime minister/chief ministers Offices would constitute the key organs of the Economic Union.

The participation of civil society in meetings of the Regional Assembly was particularly emphasized.

OECS Secretariat

Castries

19th October 2007