

## Earth Day Message

Written by Media

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**OECS Secretariat, Castries, Saint Lucia April 22nd, 2009:** The sustainability of our economies and the quality of life of the peoples of Small Islands like the OECS will in large part be shaped by the decisions we take today to prepare for the impacts of global warming.

Countries all over the world are already experiencing changes to physical environments, biological processes and weather systems, necessitating not only reactive responses, but more importantly the development of a strategic framework that would enable a planned preemptive programme to address future impacts of climate change. It is therefore important for OECS governments to prepare today for the changes that are predicted; otherwise the impacts of unsuitable decisions could severely hurt the long term viability of the fragile economies of these Member States.

One climate change expert points out that ‘the example of most islands requesting external assistance in crisis times is testimony to the inability of governments to respond to their own needs, adding further, that “if climate change continues unchecked, money that could be used for poverty alleviation and other social services, or for economic development, will instead be diverted to disaster recovery” or other reactive response efforts.

The global economic down turn and the impacts on local economies will no doubt lower the priority weighting of climate change. Yet, for the economies of the OECS countries to survive, actions must be initiated today to address alternative energy options and adaptive responses to the impacts of climate change within a framework of the equitable distribution of land resources.

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