

OECS Ministers of Environment to hold their Annual Meeting in Nevis

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(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St Lucia) OECS Government Ministers responsible for the Environment will for the first time gather in Nevis for their annual meeting. The one-day meeting will be held on Wednesday October 20, 2010 at the Mount Nevis Hotel.

A total of nine (9) Ministers have confirmed their attendance at the meeting.

Environmental Officials from Nevis are delighted at the opportunity to host the meeting, in particular, to capitalize on a unique occasion to share in environmental projects and biodiversity efforts on the island. In particular, they will highlight their achievements in the development of their renewable energy resources in wind and geothermal. Ministers will visit the wind farm that is already providing electricity to the island and will also get to see exploratory activities in geothermal energy potential.

Mr Ernie Stapleton, Permanent Secretary in the Department of Physical Planning and Environment in Nevis has confirmed that plans for the meeting are at an advanced stage and that Ministers can anticipate a great setting for successful deliberations.

During this 14th Meeting, the Ministers will discuss a number of current issues affecting the environment including the impact of recent disasters on some of the islands of the OECS. On this topic, Ministers will specifically dialogue on damage from disaster events over the past year, and their effects on the social and economic sectors. These discussions will be held with a view to devising new collective measures to reducing disaster risks and impacts, and consideration for increased skills in disaster risk management for relevant persons in their Member States.

Another key item on the agenda is discussions on how to increase the region's resiliency to the effects of climate change. This discussion will be lead by a report to the Ministers on recommendations emerging from a climate change panel discussion to be held the previous day among regional experts and technical officials.

As customary, the Ministers will also receive reports on the Environmental portfolio of the OECS Secretariat and will make recommendations on priority areas for future programming work in such areas as environmental management and planning, biodiversity management, sustainable

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livelihoods and disaster management.

In addition, the Ministers will receive presentations from Donor agency representatives on their environmental mandate and activities in various OECS Member States and will share their perspectives on future projects for sustainable development in the region.

The Meeting of Ministers will be preceded by a meeting of Chief Environmental Officers, and Permanent Secretaries who make up the OECS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on the Environment.

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