

OECS Secretariat, Castries, St. Lucia, Friday February 3rd 2012- The OECS Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretariat are collaborating on efforts to address improvement in the management framework for ocean resources to ensure their maximum contribution to economic development goals of OECS Member States. As a “kick off” to this initiative, a workshop will be held at the Bay Gardens Hotel on the 8th and 9th of February, 2012

Participants at the workshop will seek to obtain agreement on what a draft regional ocean policy should contain. The meeting will engender the beginnings of a consensus among Member States on a way forward for ocean governance in the OECS. The policy framework to be developed is expected to articulate how the common OECS marine space can be developed. The framework will also speak to critical priorities that reflect potential benefits from future uses of that marine space as well as institutional arrangements to give effect to the policy framework.

The sustainable development of ocean resources represents a key aspect of the economic development of the OECS region, in conformity with best international practices, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and other related instruments. OECS States see a need to consider the possibilities for other resources within OECS waters such as the implications of the recently endorsed CARICOM Common Fisheries Policy, marine transportation tourism, and the exploration for petroleum products.

The current OECS Secretariat ocean governance programme is geared towards: enabling the OECS Secretariat to create an institutional framework for regional cooperation in trans-boundary oceans management; strengthening national and regional capacities for the development and implementation of ocean law and policy within the framework of sub-regional cooperation; and facilitating the provision of technical services in the area of sustainable ocean resource and marine environmental management.