

(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St. Lucia Wednesday June 20th 2012), The assessment phase of a Regional Strategy for the

Development of Statistics (RSDS) commissioned by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is now drawing to a close. The Regional Strategy aims to establish a framework for the better coordination of ongoing and prospective regional initiatives in the field of statistics, build capacity for the development of key statistical series which are harmonized from one country to the next and improve arrangements for the governance of the regional statistical system so that it can provide stronger support for the OECS Economic Union. The design of the RSDS will be based in large part on the results of an assessment of the regional statistical system as it presently exists. With assistance from a consultant, the OECS Secretariat is now finalizing the results of a study which has attempted to assess the capacity of the national statistical systems of the six participating member states – Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines – as well as the statistical operations of the OECS Secretariat and related institutions.

The study contains several recommendations, made on the basis of an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the regional statistical system, including the adoption of revised statistical legislation, which is seriously outdated in all the countries. The enactment of modern statistical laws will help OECS countries address many areas where they are currently falling short of internationally acknowledged best practices. The assessment also recommends that the countries commence or intensify their preparations for national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDS). It is anticipated that these NSDSs will result in more streamlined contributions from external development partners towards strengthening of national statistical systems, increased resource endowments generally, and an enhanced role for statistics in national development. The national strategies are also expected to identify key roles for the OECS and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, thus helping to lay the groundwork for implementation of the OECS Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS). The RSDS assessment, which is being financed by the World Bank and assisted by PARIS21

(Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century), also identifies the resource situation in the OECS as a critical factor demanding urgent attention. The assessment concludes that the OECS Secretariat needs to be substantially strengthened if it is to play a more pivotal role in the development of the regional statistical system.



Commenting on the strengths highlighted in the assessment towards the OECS Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics Programme Officer at the OECS Secretariat Sean Curtis Mathurin says the national statistical legislations that are in place cover basic statistical functions and guarantee confidentiality. He added that the national statistical offices enjoy a reasonable degree of professional independence.

The results of the assessment are now expected to be utilized in helping the OECS and its Member States fashion a vision for the future of the region's statistical system, to support the full-fledged implementation of the Economic Union, and in providing pointers for preparation of a prioritized action plan towards achievement of that goal.