

**(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St Lucia)** The OECS Secretariat will convene a two day meeting next week to discuss and examine experiences learnt from the application of a Tool used to assess damage following a disaster. A total of 40 persons are expected to participate in this workshop scheduled for April 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at the Coco Palm Resorts, Rodney Bay, Saint Lucia.

The workshop is targeted at representatives from disaster agencies and Ministries of Finance and Planning in OECS Member States. During the two-day workshop, participants will discuss the Tool, which was developed by UNECLAC more than forty years ago. Officially referred to as the Disaster and Loss Assessment (DaLA) Methodology, the tool was introduced to the Caribbean in the late 1990s and was used in the OECS for the first time following the passage of Hurricane Ivan (2004) in Grenada.

The agenda for the workshop includes presentations and discussions on the effectiveness of the Tool when used to calculate the economic and social impacts of a natural disaster. Participants will also discuss its usefulness in informing recovery and rehabilitation.

A main highlight of the workshop is expected to take place when country representatives share their experiences and the lessons learnt from the use of the Tool when applied to recent disasters such as Hurricane Tomas which devastated Saint Lucia and St Vincent in October 2010.

The OECS Secretariat since 2005 has trained a total of 263 persons from across its nine Member States in the use of this disaster assessment methodology. The methodology has since been used in Member States for the purposes of measuring losses and impacts related to disasters and in the determination of reconstruction needs.

The workshop is being conducted in collaboration with the UNECLAC Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean based in Trinidad and Tobago, with funding provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office for Barbados and the OECS.

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