

**(OECS Secretariat, Castries ,Thursday October 18, 2012)** The OECS Secretariat has received a consignment of antiretroviral medicines (ARVs) valued at US\$142,000 from the Government of Brazil to treat patients with HIV/AIDS.

This consignment of ARVs represents the 5<sup>th</sup> and final shipment of essential medicines under a Cooperative Agreement, which was signed at the OECS Secretariat in 2006. At the handover ceremony at a warehouse in Castries, on Wednesday October 16

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2012, Brazil's Ambassador to the OECS, Joaquim Augusto Whitaker Salles said he was highly honoured by the reality that such a donation by his government has helped so many people in the fight against HIV and AIDS:

***"I feel highly honoured to know that these consignments have saved and will also save Caribbean lives....It is an enduring commitment that Brazil will make sure to preserve and continue for the mutual benefit of our peoples."***

The shipment will be disaggregated and distributed to Saint Lucia and the other 8 OECS Member States with the financial assistance of UNICEF-Barbados. Accepting the shipment, Head of Unit at the OECS Secretariat's Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, Francis Burnett credited the South – South partnership for strengthening the OECS Member States' capacity to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS: ***"This donation complements our other efforts from the global fund in providing a wide consortium of antiretroviral medicines for our patients. Although this shipment initially represents the final consignment in the second phase, we are hopeful that the Government of Brazil may perhaps wish to entertain maybe some form of dialogue and negotiation towards an extension of this contribution perhaps to phase-three."***

Burnett added that the OECS Governments are grateful to the Government of Brazil for the generous contribution.