



(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St. Lucia, Wednesday March 16th 2011) Senior Tourism Officials from across the OECS will meet in St. Lucia from Wednesday March 23rd

to Thursday March 24th

2011, at a workshop designed to develop the first Common Tourism Policy for the OECS region.

The workshop designed to develop the first Common Tourism Policy for the OECS Member States falls under a project financed by the Commonwealth Secretariat and comes on the heels of the recently ratified Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the OECS Economic Union. The Project financed by the Commonwealth Secretariat commenced in January 2011, and is expected to be completed in August 2011

Harmonization of policies is a key ingredient in the successful establishment of an economic union and accordingly, the revised OECS Treaty provides for policy coordination and joint action in several areas, as it seeks to deepen the level of integration and functional cooperation in various sectors, including tourism.

More specifically, the Revised Treaty of Basseterre urges OECS Member States to work towards progressive harmonization of tourism policies and where necessary, the adoption of a common policy for tourism development. Article 21 of the Protocol of Eastern Caribbean Economic Union requires that a common tourism policy be designed to foster balanced growth and development of the tourism sector in the OECS Economic Union Area.

Programme Officer for Tourism at the OECS Economic Affairs Division Dr. Loraine Nicholas

says the OECS Common tourism policy workshop in Saint Lucia will be the first of two regional consultations: ***“The Saint Lucia meeting will focus on the assessment of national tourism policies in OECS Member States, with a view to developing a common policy that guides and adds value to individual national policies. Over twenty participants from the region’s public and private sectors have confirmed their attendance at this meeting, which will be facilitated with technical assistance support provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The consultancy firm, Yellow Railroad, based in the UK has been contracted to implement the project in conjunction with the OECS Secretariat.”***

The OECS Secretariat says, given the economic significance of tourism, the success of the OECS Economic Union will be enabled by the effective coordination of tourism policies in the region. The Secretariat adds that heavy reliance on tourism for economic growth and development makes it imperative that the region adopts a strategic, sustainable, integrated and cohesive approach to tourism development, within the context of the OECS Economic Union.

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