



(OECS Secretariat, Castries, St. Lucia, Tuesday January 4th 2011) People of the OECS have moved closer towards increased benefits associated with the free movement of skills and persons as well as better business opportunities. This follows Antigua and Barbuda's historic signing of the Instrument of Ratification for the Revised OECS Treaty of Basseterre Establishing OECS Economic Union.

Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister Hon. Baldwin Spencer signed the Instrument of Ratification in St. John's on Thursday December 30th

2010. In this regard, Antigua and Barbuda is the first OECS Member State to ratify the Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union. In order for the Revised Treaty to enter into force, at least four independent OECS Member States must ratify the Treaty. Ratification is the process by which a country indicates that it intends to be bound by an international agreement such as a treaty or convention. Prior to signing the Instrument of Ratification at his office, P.M. Baldwin Spencer expressed his nation's commitment to deeper regional integration:

"By being the first Member State to ratify the Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing OECS Economic Union, Antigua and Barbuda wishes to signal its profound commitment to the implementation process."

The House of Representatives on Tuesday December 2nd 2010, passed a Resolution authorizing the ratification of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre, thus paving the way for the deposit of the Instrument of Ratification from the Government of Antigua and Barbuda with the OECS Secretariat in accordance with Article 25 of the Treaty. Article 25 provides that the Treaty shall be open for signature to all countries specified in Articles 3.1 and 3.2 and shall be subject to ratification by the signatories in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures. Antigua and Barbuda is the only OECS Member State that has a Ratification of Treaties Act (Cap. 364), and the Act provides in Section 3 that where a treaty to which Antigua and Barbuda becomes party affects or concerns the relationship between Antigua and Barbuda and any international organization, agency, association or similar body, such Treaty shall not enter into force unless it has been ratified or its ratification approved in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Antigua and Barbuda was among the six Independent OECS Member States, to sign the Revised Treaty of Basseterre on 18

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June 2010 in St. Lucia. Prime Minister Spencer also shared his expectations of the sub-committee of the Cabinet established under the chairmanship of the Minister for Finance and Economy Harold Lovell to drive the OECS Economic Union implementation process: ***“...and, early in 2011, I am looking forward to further necessary implementation steps to be proposed by the sub-committee to the Cabinet for action, including the enabling legislation that will allow certain key provisions of the Treaty to be enforceable as part of the law of Antigua and Barbuda.”***

OECS Director-General Praises Antigua and Barbuda’s Early Ratification



Meanwhile Director General of the OECS Secretariat Dr. Len Ishmael has lauded Antigua and Barbuda’s historic signing of the instrument of ratification for the Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union.

In her congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Spencer, that was dispatched as soon as the Instrument of Ratification was received Dr. Ishmael described the historic signing by Antigua and Barbuda as: ***“a wonderful end-of-year gift to the people of the OECS.”*** Dr. Ishmael further commended Antigua and Barbuda for having the distinction of creating history by being the first Member State to ratify the instrument which will bring the OECS Economic Union into being. The Director General, in her communication to Prime Minister Spencer, stated: ***“We wish to congratulate you, your Government, the Parliament and the people of Antigua and Barbuda in this singular achievement and for your steadfast commitment to the cause of the OECS Unit and Integration.”***

Prime Minister Spencer assured the Director General that the Implementation of the OECS Economic Union is one of the top policy priorities of his Government for 2011

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OECS Economic Union is a project I am passionate about, as it has the potential to bring real economic benefits and modernisation to the people of the sub-region”.

To prepare for the implementation of the Economic Union, Antigua and Barbuda has been actively participating in the regional technical working groups on movement of people, public administration, and free circulation of goods within the sub region as well as competition policy and consumer protection. The Revised Treaty creates a single economic and financial space covering all OECS Member States, and sets the stage for the deepening of the OECS integration process. Member States are preparing for the planned indicative date of January 21, 2011 for commencement of the operation of the Economic Union. Considerable technical work have gone into the implementation process, including the elaboration of the rules of procedure for the various organs of the Organization, the agreeing the framework for the facilitation of travel, the free movement of OECS nationals, the free circulation of goods and the facilitation of trade.

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