



□ ***Castries, May 05, 2012***, Leaders of the Parliamentary Opposition in the Member States of the OECS ended a successful meeting in Saint Lucia on May 04, 2012 at which they discussed issues relating to the operationalisation of the OECS Economic Union.

The meeting was convened at the instance of Dr the Hon. Kenny Anthony, Chairman of the OECS Authority and Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, and was attended by opposition Parliamentarians from all Member States except Montserrat and the BVI.

The meeting had a three-fold objective, namely:

1. To brief Parliamentarians on developments relating to the Economic Union;
2. To keep alive the process of consultation and public education which has been a feature of the Economic Union project; and
- 3) To address issues relating to the inauguration of the OECS Assembly, one of the Principal Organs of the OECS Economic Union in which OECS Parliamentarians will be the principal actors.

The Opposition Parliamentarians all expressed full support for the OECS Economic Union, with some reminding the meeting that they were active and passionate promoters of the Economic Union initiative when they served in Government (some as Prime Ministers), and asserting that they were not about to change their position because they were now members of the opposition in the Parliaments of their respective countries. All representatives expressed a readiness to provide whatever assistance was required to further the implementation of the OECS Economic Union.

The Opposition Parliamentarians also committed themselves to the process leading to the inauguration of the OECS Assembly, as well as to their participation in the Assembly itself, and to that end gave notification of the names of the Opposition Parliamentarians who would serve as members of their national delegations to the Assembly.

Participants were of the general view that the meeting was a success and that it provided a unique and valuable opportunity for dialogue and for input on matters of regional import. They called for a more mature and enlightened relationship between Government and Opposition within the OECS, and sought the assurance of the Chairman of the OECS that their views and concerns would be addressed to the OECS Authority.



For his part, the Chairman saw the meeting as an absolute necessity in the process of advancing the implementation of the OECS Economic Union. He felt that it confirmed the existence of a new and enlightened thinking in respect of governance in the region, and saw it as: *“sending the requisite signals to the people of the OECS, the wider region and indeed the world, that the leadership of the countries which constitute the OECS possess the maturity required by the times, are serious about advancing the interests of the people whom they represent, and are prepared to invoke the requisite political will to do that which is necessary to secure the advancement of those interests.”* The Chairman undertook to bring to the attention of the Authority the views and concerns expressed at the meeting by the various delegations, and to make recommendations wherever appropriate in respect of the concerns expressed. The next meeting of the OECS Authority is scheduled for June 10-12, 2012 in St

Vincent and the Grenadines.