

The OECS has attracted formal relations with yet another global powerhouse. Today Wednesday September 23, 2009 the OECS Secretariat accepted letters of credence from the first Ambassador of Brazil to the OECS Joao Batista Cruz.

In accepting the credentials on behalf of the people of the OECS, Director General Dr. Len Ishmael, told Wednesday's ceremony Brazil's decision to join the growing number of countries to establish formal relations with the OECS represents a vote of confidence in the OECS as a grouping of small states. Dr. Ishmael also noted Wednesday's historic achievement as one which further demonstrates the many examples of faith in the value and potential of South-South cooperation: *"The Brazilian economy has emerged as both a regional and global powerhouse. The country is the world's largest producer of soya beans and a major producer of citrus juices, beef, iron ore and very importantly, bio-fuels. Just recently it announced the discovery of vast reserves of oil estimated in the region of some 40 billion barrels. Should these resources be realized, the economic power of Brazil would be incomparable. With a population of 190 million people the market value of Brazil and its economic significance to the OECS, just simply cannot be overlooked."*

Brazil's first Ambassador to the OECS Joao Batista Cruz described his designation as an honour. He indicated that Brazil's formalizing of relations with the OECS is part of that country's objectives towards intensifying relations with Caribbean countries with the opening of Brazilian Embassies throughout the region: *"This is a clear demonstration of the interest Brazil has in the approach to the country members of the OECS.....As the Minister for foreign Affairs of Brazil, Ambassador Celso Amorim, mentioned in a previous message to the OECS the relations between Brazil and every country member are excellent and the designation of a representative resident in St. Lucia will certainly reinforce that relationship. I hope to correspond and contribute to the objectives of the OECS."*

The OECS Director General further expressed to Ambassador Batista Cruz, her confidence in the relationship between the OECS and Brazil: *"This ceremony has historical significance not just for the OECS and Brazil, but I am sure for you personally as well. Your Government has given you the distinct honour of being the first ambassador to the OECS. Yours will be the responsibility to chart the course for others to follow, to set the precedents, the standards and the benchmarks, by which others will be guided. I am confident that you are up to the task, that you will work arduously to build the foundation for a mutually beneficial relationship between Brazil and OECS and that you will make your country proud. For our part I wish to assure you of our full cooperation and support as you pursue the mandate handed to you by your government.- Let me once again welcome you to the OECS Secretariat and wish you every success in your new capacity as Ambassador to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States."*

-Dr. Ishmael

Earlier this year, on behalf of the people of the nine-member grouping, the OECS Secretariat received letters of credence from the Ambassador of the United States of Mexico to the OECS as well as the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the OECS