



OECS Secretariat, Castries Saint. Lucia January 14th, 2010: The OECS Secretariat has signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Government of Spain to implement a Language Training Programme, with a view to developing the Spanish language skills of OECS Diplomats and Professionals.

Under this Agreement Spain, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Assistance Agency, also known as “Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo” (**AECID**), will provide to the OECS a native Spanish lecturer who has extensive specialist training and experience in teaching Spanish as a foreign language.

The Cooperation Agreement requires the Spanish Lecturer to be attached professionally to a Tertiary Level Institute during his/her tenure in Saint Lucia. Therefore, this Cooperation Agreement also involves the Sir Arthur Community College (**SALCC**) in Saint Lucia, which will derive specific benefits that will redound to the strengthening of its language faculty through programme development. The Agreement is in accordance with the goals of all three parties to enhance the institutional and/or academic development, as well as the consolidation of Spanish studies in the OECS region. The arrangement has an initial cycle of three academic years (commencing August 2010), with a maximum duration of three cycles.

The Ambassador of Spain to the OECS, signed the Cooperation Agreement on Thursday January 14th 2010 during a brief ceremony at the Headquarters of the OECS Secretariat in Castries, Saint Lucia.

Director General of the OECS, Dr. Len Ishmael welcomed the partnership signing as a viable

and potentially great one. Dr Ishmael noted the leadership role the OECS has to play in developing the scope of its officers through the teaching or development of Spanish speaking skills. Dr Ishmael indicated that the future of the OECS will require it to be articulated fully into the rest of the world and that persons will be needed who can represent the OECS with all degrees of confidence anywhere in the world: ***“We are small but not without a lot of ambition and we have launched the OECS School of diplomacy knowing fully well that the issue of language in going to be very important...The ability for us to actually have a lecturer resident here to be able to support us in maximizing that goal, where we start the process of being bilingual, and to be able to lead by example in our region is very symbolic of the leadership role that this organization must play.”***

As part of the Agreement, the OECS Secretariat and the SALCC will share the responsibility of providing the classroom facilities for teaching and the logistical support for the Lecturer while he/she is in Saint Lucia.

This event can be deemed as yet another landmark achievement that signals the strengthening of cooperation between the OECS region and the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, under the leadership and drive of His Excellency Jesus Silva – Ambassador of Spain to the OECS.