



**Castries St. Lucia, Monday April 20th, 2010.** Germany and the OECS have established relations at the Ambassadorial level.

This significant milestone was achieved when Germany's newly appointed Ambassador to the OECS, H.E. Dr Ernst Martens presented his credentials to Dr Len Ishmael, Director General of the OECS at an impressive ceremony at the OECS Secretariat in Castries. In attendance were a German team of diplomatic, consular and technical personnel, members of the Diplomatic Corps in St Lucia, and senior staff of the OECS Secretariat.

In accepting the Letters of Credence from Dr Martens, the OECS Director General described the occasion as one full of significance and symbolism, pointing to the continued growth of interest by Third Countries in the OECS and its achievements. She cited the examples of Spain, Mexico and Brazil which have all established diplomatic relations with the OECS, as well as other countries in Europe and elsewhere such as France and Finland which are on the verge of appointing Ambassadors to the Organisation.

The Director General noted that as the second European Union member country to establish diplomatic relations with the OECS, Germany was also the fourth largest economy in the world, and the largest economy in the largest regional integration grouping in the world. She also highlighted the fact that the OECS and its Member States have long enjoyed excellent relations with Germany, and that they have benefitted tremendously from programmes of cooperation pursued at the bilateral as well as the regional level. The Director General took the opportunity to convey to the Government of Germany the thanks and appreciation of the Government and people of the OECS for the invaluable support provided to the region over the years.

In closing, the Director General assured the German Ambassador to the OECS of the

Secretariat's full support upon the assumption of his new assignment.

For his part the German Ambassador acknowledged that the occasion was a special one for Germany as well as for him personally, noting that the OECS has been growing in stature over the years.

For Germany, regional and sub-regional integration arrangements had great value and significance in the global context. He noted that this was not surprising as Germany had itself benefitted tremendously from such an arrangement. According to the Ambassador, the EU had brought peace, security and well being not only to Germany, but to the Member States of the Union as well. In this connection, the Ambassador pointed to the growing importance of the OECS to its members and others, and let it be known that his Government was impressed with the integration experience of the Organisation and with its many achievements.

In acknowledging the long history of cooperation between Germany and the OECS region the Ambassador explained that his Government felt a special responsibility, against the background of its own experience in the European Union, to assist the OECS integration process. He opined that the OECS had a great future, was doing exemplary work, and needed every support in that regard.

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