



**(Castries December 17, 2010)-** Germany's newly appointed Ambassador to the OECS, His Excellency Stefan Schluter, presented his credentials to the OECS Secretariat on Thursday December 16<sup>th</sup> 2010. The OECS Director of Economic Affairs, Mr. Randolph Cato, presided over the ceremony in the absence of the OECS Director General, Her Excellency Dr. Len Ishmael.

Ambassador Schluter will be replacing Ambassador Ernst Martens who served as his country's first diplomatic representative to the OECS. Diplomatic relations between the OECS and Germany were formally established earlier this year on April 19<sup>th</sup>. The OECS views Germany as one of its more strategic partners, and sees the relationship as having the potential to be an important platform for promoting development in the region. Germany, being the largest economy in the European Union, is not only a critical member of that economic and political union, but also of the wider global economy. In addition, Germany is the world's third largest actor in the field of development cooperation.

In congratulating the Ambassador on his appointment Mr. Cato remarked that: ***"The OECS highly values its relationship with Germany, a relationship which is characterized by a closeness that is based on common concerns and mutual friendship and support."***

He further noted that Germany leads the world in the field of renewable energy: ***"A global shift to renewable energy sources would be an attractive prospect for the OECS region, being particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of Climate Change, which has the potential to negatively impact tourism and thus our economic livelihood."***

In addition, the Director also went on to mention that in the context of the implementation process of the EU-CARIFORUM EPA, Germany could help the region to make best use of EPA opportunities by improving and enhancing its production capabilities, given Germany's incredibly strong position in the global economy as a top producer.



In response, the Ambassador indicated that there is great potential for deeper cooperation with the OECS and added that: ***“many are full of praise for the OECS and its activities.”*** He went on to explain that one of the aims of the German Government is to improve energy efficiency in the region, and alluded to Germany’s willingness to encourage the European Union to sign short-stay Visa Waiver Agreements with remaining OECS member states.

Both the OECS and Germany have expressed satisfaction with the level of cooperation experienced to date, and are of the view that there is a great potential for further strengthening of relations. Both sides confirmed their commitment to working in that direction.

The presentation of credentials by Ambassador Schluter follows that of His Excellency Paul Brummel of the United Kingdom in October 2010. So far, seven countries have established relations at the diplomatic level with the OECS, including Spain, Mexico, Brazil, Finland France and the UK.

## NEW GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO THE OECS PRESENTS CREDENTIALS

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