



(Wednesday October 26, 2011, OECS Secretariat Castries)– The USA and the OECS established relations at the diplomatic level on Tuesday October 25th

2011.

OECS Director General Dr. Len Ishmael accepted Letters of Introduction from the United States Envoy to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, Mr. Christopher Sandrolini, at a ceremony which took place earlier today at the OECS Secretariat. The formalization of relations between the USA and the OECS is expected to enhance a longstanding relationship between the United States and the region, signifying, in the words of the Director General. ***“...the beginning of a new chapter in the long and enduring relationship between the United States and its friends in the Eastern Caribbean.”***

The Director General, in her remarks, took the opportunity to highlight some of the historical achievements of the OECS at advancing integration and building resilience among its members to meet the profound global challenges and imperatives of the 21st Century. In response to these challenges and the geopolitical changes that came with them, the OECS has had to reposition itself both regionally and internationally in order to engage in the kinds of relationship that were necessary to pursue its strategic interests. The new relationship with the US represents a typical outcome of this repositioning, and a number of other countries have already given formal indication of their intention to establish relations with the OECS at the diplomatic level.

According to the Director General:” ***We at the OECS are indeed happy that the United States has now joined the growing list of countries which have seen value in entering into a***

deeper and more formal relationship with us, and appointing a special representative to manage that relationship. We received with appreciation, the letter of the US Secretary of State informing us of the decision to proceed with this level of engagement making the US the eighth country to establish relations with the OECS at the diplomatic level”.

In extending her best wishes for the successful conduct of his assignment as the United States Envoy to the OECS, the Director General expressed her delight that he would be taking up his assignment at such an exciting time in the historical evolution of the Organisation.

Before a mixed audience comprising members of the Diplomatic Corps and senior OECS officials, the US Envoy expressed great pleasure at being selected to represent the United States of America as its first envoy to the OECS. According to Mr. Sandrolini: ***“Today marks an important milestone in American engagement in the Eastern Caribbean, and underscores our commitment to addressing our common challenges together. From climate change to social development, from trade policy to citizen security, we look forward to a dynamic partnership that enhances our already strong bilateral relationships with the countries of the Eastern Caribbean”.***

To illustrate the commitment by the United States to promoting economic integration and increased trade and investment, Mr. Sandrolini highlighted some of the areas of cooperation currently ongoing between the United States and Eastern Caribbean countries. These include USAID projects to strengthen juvenile justice systems and build climate change adaptive capacity within all six independent members of the OECS. He also mentioned initiatives being undertaken through the regional framework provided by the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, a three-year project that would focus on legal reform, capacity building, introduction of modern detention/rehabilitation processes and enhanced civil society involvement.

In conclusion, Mr. Sandrolini noted that: ***“with the United States now a formal partner of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, we look forward to increasing our cooperation on these and other issues of importance to the peoples of our countries. Relationships are important in our society, as in yours, and we are very encouraged by the regional cooperation and collaboration among the members and look forward to a long and productive relationship with the OECS”.***

Both the Director General and the US Envoy looked forward with expectation to the USA and the OECS having an enduring and dynamic partnership that is strategic and proactive, and founded on the principles of mutual respect, common interests and shared values.

[Remarks by OECS Director General Dr. Len Ishmael at the Accreditation Ceremony for Mr. Christopher J. Sandrolini](#)