

## **COMMUNIQUE**

### **Fifty-Sixth Meeting of the OECS Authority**

#### **Rosalie Bay Resort**

#### **Commonwealth of Dominica**

**November 22-23, 2012**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Fifty-Sixth Meeting of the OECS Authority was convened at Rosalie Bay Resort in Commonwealth of Dominica over the period November 22-23, 2012 under the Chairmanship of Dr. the Hon. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines. With the exception of the British Virgin Islands, all Member States were in attendance and representation of Heads of Government included Anguilla, Commonwealth of Dominica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Also in attendance were the Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) and the Secretary General of the Caribbean Community.

In the main, the Meeting focused on:

1. Martinique and Guadeloupe application for Associate Membership to the OECS
2. Establishment of the Economic Affairs Council
3. Financing of the OECS Secretariat
4. The OECS Assembly
5. Accommodation of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre in the Further Revision of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas
6. Oceans Governance in the OECS
7. Engagement with the OECS Business Community
8. ECTEL and Observer Status of Antigua & Barbuda and Montserrat
9. Visa Restrictions: Canada and the OECS

## **MARTINIQUE AND GUADELOUPE APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE OECS**

OECS Heads of Government considered the work undertaken by the OECS Secretariat in the preparation of background papers and negotiating briefs on key issues, and the establishment and the operationalisation of the OECS Negotiating Team geared towards advancing discussions on Martinique's accession as an Associate Member of the OECS. Heads agreed to the technical and institutional arrangements put in place to determine the nature and scope of the membership and to undertake the negotiations including trade and functional cooperation and ease of travel between Martinique and OECS Member States

Heads further agreed to proceeding first with Martinique followed by Guadeloupe as proposed

by both French Departments

## **ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COUNCIL**

OECS Heads of Government noted the primary responsibility and composition of the Economic Affairs Council as outlined in the Revised Treaty of Basseterre. Based on the recommendations of the Commission, Heads agreed that the composition of the EAC will comprise a Chairperson who is chosen by the Chairman of the Authority and who will be a senior minister of government of his Member State. The rest of the Council would comprise one senior minister of government nominated by each of the Member States. The Economic Affairs Council is expected to meet in the near future.

## **FINANCING OF THE OECS SECRETARIAT**

The Special Committee established by the Authority to develop a proposal for the sustainable financing of the OECS Secretariat presented an Interim Report based on a system of automaticity of financing. Heads agreed that the Special Committee will continue to work towards completing the final Report by February 2013 for final approval by the Authority at its 57<sup>th</sup>

Meeting scheduled for May 2013.

## **OECS ASSEMBLY**

OECS Heads of Government held discussions which mapped the way forward for the work of the Assembly and agreed to the establishment of a system of Select Committees for the review of proposed Acts/Regulations. Heads of Government also agreed to the convening of two (2) meetings of the Assembly in February and March 2013. Heads of Government underscored the importance of ensuring that there is deepened and widespread understanding among OECS citizens of the role and functioning of the Assembly through a comprehensive public awareness drive.

### **ACCOMMODATION OF THE REVISED TREATY OF BASSETERRE IN THE FURTHER REVISION OF THE REVISED TREATY OF CHAGUARAMAS**

The OECS Heads of Government mandated the Secretariats of the OECS and CARICOM to meet at the earliest possible opportunity to conclude on the implementation of a decision of the Conference of CARICOM Heads of Government in 2007 to accommodate the Revised Treaty of Basseterre within a further revision of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. Heads also agreed that this matter would be placed on the agenda of the upcoming CARICOM intercessional meeting which is scheduled to be held in Haiti in February 2013.

### **OCEANS GOVERNANCE IN THE OECS**

OECS Heads of Government approved the process which will allow Member States to establish and publish baselines from which their maritime zones are to be measured. Heads also agreed to a revised OECS maritime boundary delimitation strategy that will allow Member States to negotiate boundaries among themselves prior to commencing delimitation proceedings with third States. The OECS Heads of Government agreed that the OECS Secretariat will continue to collaborate with the Commonwealth Secretariat to obtain Technical Assistance to prepare for the delimitation its maritime boundaries.

Heads reaffirmed the earlier decision that all actions being undertaken by Member States on maritime boundaries will be within the previously agreed arrangements.

## **ENGAGEMENT WITH THE OECS BUSINESS COMMUNITY**

OECS Heads of Government engaged in a dialogue and consultation with a delegation from the OECS Private Sector on a range of issues regarding Private Sector Development and considered this as the beginning of continued interaction between the Heads of Government and the Private Sector. Heads of Government agreed on the need to establish institutional mechanisms and arrangements, through a Business Forum, comprising representatives of the Private and Public Sectors, to advance actionable items that will enhance the regional economic developmental thrust.

## **ECTEL AND OBSERVER STATUS OF ANTIGUA & BARBUDA AND MONTSERRAT**

Heads of Government welcomed the grant of Observer Status to Montserrat and Antigua and Barbuda in ECTEL and expressed hope that this decision will lead to their full membership over time.

## **VISA RESTRICTIONS: CANADA AND THE OECS**

OECS Heads of Government reiterated their concerns regarding the new visa restrictions imposed by the Canadian authorities on St Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia. They also expressed their continued profound discomfort with the manner in which this was done.

However Heads of Government further agreed on the necessity of their citizens wishing to visit Canada, doing so in accordance with the law and immigration procedures of Canada.

OECS Heads of Government applauded the European Commission for its decision to include Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the Schengen visa waiver arrangements already granted to Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis for visits to the Schengen Member States for periods up to 90 days.

## **57<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF OECS AUTHORITY**

The 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Authority will be convened in mid May, 2013 (date to be determined) in Antigua and Barbuda under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Prime Minister, Baldwin Spencer.

***Commonwealth of Dominica***

***November 23, 2012***