

February 2011

The Trade Policy Unit convenes another meeting of the Trade Negotiations Group

The Trade Policy Unit convened the Fifteenth Meeting of the Trade Negotiations Group (TNG) on 1-2 February in St. Kitts/Nevis. The TNG comprises trade officials, private sector representatives and the Secretariat. Its mandate is to formulate positions on subjects being negotiated with countries and groups of countries. This meeting discussed negotiations with Canada and the World Trade Organisation. It also considered implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement, Economic Union Treaty and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

The meeting agreed that Member States:

- * will provide the Geneva Mission with information that it required to take positions on their behalf in the WTO and to participate in meetings in Geneva where necessary;
- * will continue work on the listing of items that would be subject to tariff reduction and submit a copy of this document to the OECS and CARICOM Secretariats. They will also continue national consultations on subjects being discussed in the negotiations such as services and trade related issues;
- * will prepare national EPA implementation work plans and the Hub and Spokes Project would provide support to implement the plans upon request;
- * will convene consultations on trade facilitation and the free circulation of goods;
- * The Secretariat would revise the work plan for implementing the trade policy regime in the Economic Union to include specific activities.

The TNG also proposed changes to the scope of work for a study to review the regime that provides support to infant industries in Less Developed Countries in CARICOM such as the OECS. Resources to convene this meeting of the TNG were provided by the Inter American Development Bank.

The Trade Policy Unit continues coordination in trade facilitation

The Trade Policy Unit continues to be concerned about the action that Member States are taking to reduce the time and cost of moving goods across borders which is referred to as Trade Facilitation. The Unit met with trade facilitation focal points and it was agreed that national trade facilitation groups would discuss reports commissioned by the Unit such as "The Trade Facilitation Cluster Study" and "Trade Facilitation Architecture Study" in order to implement the recommendations. The Unit also received information from representatives from the International Finance Corporation and Inter American Development Bank on activities that are being undertaken and planned to help countries reduce the cost of trade transactions.

The next issue of UpDate will inter alia with regional and international trade issues.

Email contact: tpu@oecs.org (<mailto:tpu@oecs.org>)

An Update from the OECS Trade Policy Unit on Trade Matters of Importance to the Sub Region