

September 2011

OECS officials start to prepare for the WTO Ministerial Conference

The Trade Policy Unit and the Geneva Mission convened a video conference on 23rd September with trade officials to commence preparations for the upcoming eighth ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation which is scheduled for 15-17th December in Geneva, Switzerland.

It is important for the OECS Member States to participate in this ministerial conference in order to ensure that their interests relating to the rules for trade in agricultural and industrial products are preserved and that they register their views on the work programme of the World Trade Organisation for the next two years.

The representatives of the Geneva Mission provided officials with information on the subjects that are likely to be on the agenda of the Conference of interest to the OECS such as climate change, Aid For Trade, and dispute settlement and recommended positions that Member States should adopt on these issues for the approval of the OECS Heads of Government.

Administrative issues relating to member state participation in the conference and the preparation of ministerial statements were also discussed.

The Trade Policy Unit intends to convene monthly meetings in order to update officials on the preparations for the conference and to assist them to crystallize their positions.

OECS officials discuss an Aid For Trade Strategy for the Region

An Aid For Trade Strategy for the OECS was the subject of a teleconference convened by the Trade Policy Unit on 20th September. Representatives of the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) informed trade officials of the plan to complete an Aid For Trade Strategy for CARICOM Member States by March 2012 with funding from the IDB. It was agreed that the national Aid For Trade Focal Points would convene consultations in order to identify national Aid For Trade priorities and officials will meet again to agree on OECS Aid For Trade priorities.

The representatives of the IDB also informed the officials of a Freight Logistics Project for CARICOM also being funded by the Bank. The Project will amongst other things, identify and analyze the regional and global maritime trade corridors used by CARICOM countries; forecast trade challenges or opportunities for strategic commodities in CARICOM countries; examine the performance of freight logistics and trade facilitation measures for three regional hubs (Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Barbados).

The benefits of the Project are increased availability and reliability of data and information in the areas of freight logistics, maritime transport and trade facilitation, identification and analysis of regional trade and shipping patterns, a Regional Maritime Trade Corridors Action Plan with recommendations aimed at: reducing transport costs, improving transport services and infrastructure, increasing the competitiveness of the region's goods and services and improving information quality and access for decision making.

If you have questions about trade policy issues:

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