

April 2012

Trade Policy Unit continues consultations on the CARICOM Canada negotiations

The Trade Policy Unit continues to assist Member states to prepare their positions for the CARICOM Canada negotiations. The Unit recently assisted member states to consult with relevant stakeholders on Cultural Co-operation and Innovation. Stakeholders were informed of the negotiating issues on these subjects in order to identify areas of concern and interest with respect to the Draft Texts. Their inputs were elicited on technical assistance, capacity building needs and priorities which should be taken into account in the ongoing negotiations for a Trade and Development Agreement with Canada. One-day consultations were held in Antigua/Barbuda, St. Kitts/Nevis and Dominica. Practitioners in the subject areas and public sector agencies which impact on the implementation of trade agreements participated in the meetings.

The information obtained from the sessions will be utilised to prepare an OECS position which will include priority areas for technical assistance in Culture and Innovation, co-operation activities for performing arts, publishing, and innovation and the categories of cultural professionals and practitioners that require training. The sessions were convened in collaboration with the respective Ministry of Trade and the CARICOM Office of Trade Negotiations and funding was provided by the Hub and Spokes Project. Consultations will be held in Saint Lucia and Grenada in May.

The CARICOM-Canada Trade and Development Agreement will contain the rules which will govern trade in goods, services and agriculture products between CARICOM and Canada.

Trade perspective to be included in development strategy and relations with other countries

The Trade Policy Unit submitted a chapter to be included in the revised OECS Development and Growth Strategy. The Unit provided information on the strategic objectives, targets, development gaps and short and medium term strategies. The OECS Growth and Development Strategy is a document that will provide the blue print for the region's development for the next five years. It will be used by development partners, member governments, private sector, civil society and the Secretariat in order to get information on the OECS vision, strategies and programmes in areas such as education, health, manufacturing, agriculture, creative industries and environmental/sustainable development. The Strategy which is expected to be completed by 2013 will be submitted to Heads of Government for approval.

The Unit will provide information on OECS trade relations with Martinique and Guadeloupe which will be included in a dossier that will be submitted to Heads of Government in order to assist them in deciding how to pursue closer relations with the French outermost regions of Martinique and Guadeloupe. The French regions formally expressed an interest to become associate members of the OECS and this has been welcomed by the Heads of Government.

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