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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. On 5th June the Unit convened a coordination meeting of relevant stakeholders from the OECS to prepare for the Sixth Meeting of CARICOM's Technical Working Group (TWG) on Services and Investment which was held on 7-8th June. The meeting agreed on OECS positions on the items on the agenda for the TWG particularly those arising from national consultations which were held in April and May such cultural cooperation, and innovation, as well as areas in which Member States require additional time in order to consult with stakeholders.

The Unit also supported Member States during a meeting of CARICOM's Technical Working Group (TWG) on market access and agriculture which was held on 28th June. This meeting discussed inter alia tariff liberalization that is modalities for exchanging information on products that will be exempt from tariff reduction and those that will be subject to a phased reduction of duty. The TWG also considered matters related to customs procedures such as penalties, review and appeal and protection of information.

The CARICOM-Canada Trade and Development Agreement will contain the rules which will govern trade in goods, services and agricultural products between CARICOM Member States and Canada. The next negotiating round is scheduled for July 16th 2012.

The OECS Trade Negotiations Group (TNG) will hold its 17th meeting in July

The Trade Policy Unit is preparing to convene the 17th meeting of the OECS Trade Negotiations Group on 18th July. The Trade Negotiations Group is comprised of trade officials from the OECS Member States, representatives of the private sector and the OECS Secretariat. Its main objective is to assist Member States to manage their external trade relations by facilitating the formulation of positions on external trade negotiations.

The Group will consider issues relating to the ongoing negotiations with Canada, implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, Economic Union and the Economic Partnership Agreement. Decisions of the TNG will assist Member States particularly with respect to their participation in the negotiation of a trade and development agreement with Canada..

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

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

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