

July 2012

The Trade Policy Unit convenes the Seventeenth Meeting of the TNG

The Unit convened the seventeenth meeting of the Trade Negotiations Group (TNG) on July 18th. The dates for the meeting were set in order to allow for coordination before the 35th meeting of the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in July. Unfortunately, this meeting of COTED did not take place. Given financial constraints faced by the Secretariat and Member States, the meeting was convened as a video conference. Due to time and scheduling constraints it was decided to conduct the meeting in two sessions. The first session on 18th July would treat with urgent matters and the second session would address the remaining items on the agenda. The agenda included items such as the CARICOM-Canada, WTO negotiations and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) particularly the regime to protect infant industries commonly referred to as Article 164. The meeting will be re-convened at a date to be determined to discuss the remaining items on the agenda. The decisions taken by the TNG are the basis of Member States negotiating positions in organisations such as the WTO and CARICOM. The meeting was attended by trade officials and representatives of the private sector.

The Trade Policy Unit prepares to launch a trade facilitation Project

The United Nations Council for Trade and Economic Development (UNCTAD) embarked upon a pilot project to assist developing countries to identify the activities, technical and financial resources required to implement trade facilitation reforms including, the implementation of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, once it is completed. With funding from the European Union and Norway, UNCTAD will prepare national implementation plans in developing countries such as the OECS in collaboration with organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Customs Organization. The expected outputs of the project will be updated national needs self-assessments and implementation plans for each measure under negotiation in the WTO which will build on the achievements of the OECS in trade facilitation and customs reform.

UNCTAD proposes to recruit one national consultant from each Member State, who will update the needs assessments reports and prepare implementation plans, in collaboration with National Trade Facilitation Task Forces. One international consultant will be recruited to prepare an OECS plan that will form the basis of a regional strategy, which will be incorporated into the work programme for implementation of the OECS Economic Union. The Project will be launched during a workshop to be held in Saint Lucia during 21-22 August 2012. Trade Facilitation is about simplifying, standardizing and harmonising procedures involved in international trade transactions in order to reduce costs and time and increase transparency and predictability.

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