



Castries St. Lucia, Friday March 19th, 2010, The OECS Secretariat holds a regional conference on Higher Education from March 22 to 24, 2010 at the Bay Gardens Hotel, Saint Lucia. The conference, which is being held under the theme **Higher Education and Skills for National Development**, has been organised in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, the World Bank, the Commonwealth of Learning and UNESCO.

The conference formally opens on Monday 22nd March at 7:00 p.m. with welcome remarks by Dr. Len Ishmael, Director General of the OECS Secretariat and by Hon. Arsene James, Minister of Education, Saint Lucia. Sir Dwight Venner, Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, will deliver the keynote address.

A select group of eminent regional and international educators and private sector representatives are expected to present papers and to discuss a range of issues in the field of tertiary education. Among those presenting are: Dame Pearlette Louisy, Governor General, Saint Lucia; Sir John Daniel, President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning; Dr. Didacus Jules, Registrar, CXC; Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, Pro Vice Chancellor, UWI; and Dr. Jamil Salmi, Higher Education Coordinator, World Bank. Conference participants include OECS Ministers of Education, Permanent Secretaries of Ministries of Education, Chief Education Officers, Heads of Colleges of the OECS, and representatives of regional institutions and development partners.

OECS countries will be provided a forum at the conference to exchange knowledge and ideas on: (i) how best to increase access to quality higher education in an efficient and sustainable manner; and (ii) how higher education can best support national development and competitiveness.

OECS Countries Plan to Reshape Higher Education Sector

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The conference has been organised in the context of the critical importance of higher education in improving the competitiveness of OECS countries in the global knowledge economy and in view of the decision by several countries of the region to transition their colleges to universities. One of the key outcomes will be a framework for increasing access to quality and relevant higher education across the OECS region in a cost effective and sustainable manner. Conference outputs will also contribute to the formulation of a regional education strategy as mandated by the OECS Authority at their 50th meeting in November 2009.

To obtain addresses and speeches from the meeting, click [Here](#)

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