

## Signed and Sealed, OECS Member States Take the Bold Step Towards Economic Union.

Written by Media

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**Castries, St Lucia, Wednesday June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2010.** It started on June 18<sup>th</sup> 1981 when a group of countries in the Leeward and Windward islands committed to deepen cooperation among them by signing the Treaty of Basseterre that established the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, OECS. Now, 29 years later, the Member States reinforced that commitment in Saint Lucia on OECS Day, Friday June 18

<sup>th</sup>  
2010, through the signing of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the OECS Economic Union.

During the historic signing ceremony which was broadcast live throughout the region, a capacity audience comprising school children, local, regional and international delegates, the media and staff of the OECS Secretariat, bore witness to the signing of the Treaty by leaders of the six OECS Independent Member States - Antigua and Barbuda, The Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

OECS Director General Dr. Len Ishmael welcomed the celebratory moment as a journey towards sustained economic growth for a region which has been surviving waves of global economic hardships. The Director General also suggested that the OECS Economic Union can serve the future development of the Caribbean as a whole: ***“Tonight the cast is different and so is the stage. The world too is an enormously different place. But the place, its story, its spirit and the journey remain the same, as a new generation of leaders move bravely forward, committed to a sense of common purpose and firm in their resolve that there can be no turning back.”***

In an informative address, OECS Chairman Dr. Denzil Douglas saluted the signatories of the Treaty of Basseterre describing those predecessors as the pioneers of the OECS integration movement. He applauded the determination of the newly independent states in the 1980's to

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combine their efforts for economic survival and said that the region must never doubt its capacity to achieve. Chairman Douglas also praised the people of the region, stating: ***“They are the most deserving. They are the ones who have been clamoring over the years for a closer union. They are the ones who have provided inspiration. They are the ones who provided the motivation as well. They are the ones who deserve and should receive our greatest praise and so on behalf of my colleagues Heads of Government I say thank you over and over again and let us give the people of the region our own tremendous applause.”***

Students of the St. Mary’s College, an all male Secondary School in Saint Lucia, treated the audience to a dramatic presentation from the works of one of Saint Lucia’s Nobel Laureates, the Honourable Derek Walcott.

In fitting closure to the ceremony on the signing of the Revised Treaty, the staff of the OECS Secretariat delivered a rendition of The OECS Song, “Stay Up OECS”, part of which reads: “Moving on together, forever and ever, to higher heights we’ll aspire for a brighter future, One People One Region Committed to Success...Rise Up Stay Up OECS.”

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