

In support of the thrust towards an OECS Economic Union, there exists an urgent need for the OECS Secretariat to facilitate in collaboration with Member States Statistics Departments, the compilation and production of accurate, reliable, comparable, complete and accessible statistics and information to support the processes of regional policy formulation, decision-making and monitoring of programmes designed to benefit the citizens of the OECS region.

Statistics are routinely presented in an effort to add credibility and bolster decision-making, policy formulation and advice. While the utilization of statistics for these purposes is a standard and commonplace practice in more advanced countries, the same cannot be said to obtain in the OECS sub-region, largely because of capacity and system constraints. Consequently, the sub-region is more often than not disadvantaged and unprepared to make informed and well-researched decisions, policies and recommendations on matters of national and regional interest. This deficiency in the extent of evidence-based decision and policy making, if not urgently and comprehensively addressed, can seriously compromise the efficiency and efficacy with which decisions and policies of importance to the pursuit of OECS Economic Union are made and executed.

Within the context of the OECS Economic Union, the availability of comparable data reduces the degree of uncertainty in decision-making, minimizes the need for approximation and enables the formulation of appropriate policy responses. The benefits of having such data are magnified during periods of economic stress. For these reasons, statistics are key decision tools for policy-makers, as well as a vital resource for the general public, including the media, to inform themselves of developments in the society, either positive or adverse. Overall therefore, statistics are a necessary ingredient in a progressive democracy. Whatever the intended user or the desired use, statistics should be comprehensive, documented, and easily available to all users.

The OECS Secretariat collaborates with Member States to produce and disseminate a range of data on Trade, Tourism, Agriculture, the Labour Market, Environment, Health and Social to facilitate processes that will improve policy formulation and decision making within the Secretariat and Member States. Moreover, the Secretariat is committed to the implementation of projects, programmes or initiatives that will equip Member States with enhanced statistical infrastructure, systems and data management capacities that can support the OECS Economic Union and national economic, political and social development efforts, in a sustainable manner.

Extracts from the Revised Treaty of Basseterre Establishing the Organisation of Eastern

Caribbean States (OECS):

ARTICLE 4: PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ORGANISATION

4.2 In achieving the purposes of the Organisation the Member States shall implement decisions of the Organisation under this Treaty and otherwise endeavour to co-ordinate, harmonise and undertake joint actions and pursue joint policies particularly in the fields of:

s) statistics;