



ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES

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COMMUNIQUE

Forty-Ninth Meeting of the OECS Authority

**Treasure Isle Hotel
Tortola, The Virgin Islands (BVI)**

20-22 May 2009

INTRODUCTION

The Forty-Ninth Meeting of the Authority of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States was held on May 20th to 22nd at the Treasure Isle Hotel, Tortola, the Virgin Islands (BVI), under the Chairmanship of the Hon. Dr. Lowell Lewis, Chief Minister of Montserrat.

Heads of Government and Representatives of Heads of Government in attendance were:

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| Hon. Baldwin Spencer | Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda |
| Hon. Dr. Colin McIntyre | Representing the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica |
| Hon. Tillman Thomas | Prime Minister of Grenada |
| Hon. Dr. Lowell Lewis | Chief Minister of Montserrat |
| Hon. Dr. Denzil Douglas | Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis |
| Hon. Stephenson King | Prime Minister of Saint Lucia |
| Hon. Louis Straker | Representing the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines |
| Hon. Osborne Fleming | Chief Minister of Anguilla |
| Hon. Ralph O'Neal | Premier of the Virgin Islands (BVI) |

Other Heads of Delegation in attendance were:

Sir K. Dwight Venner Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank
Sir Hugh Rawlins Chief Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court
Mr. Irwin Larocque Assistant Secretary General, CARICOM Secretariat
Ms. Ann Marie Warner Caribbean Development Bank

OPENING CEREMONY



The Opening Ceremony was held on the evening of May 20th at the H. Lavity Stout Community College Auditorium, Parquita Bay.

In her remarks at the ceremony, the OECS Director General, Dr. Len Ishmael extended special welcome to the Governor of the US Virgin Islands H.E. Mr. John P. de Jongh Jr. and the Ambassador of Spain to the OECS H.E. Mr. Jesus Silva, who were also in attendance as special guests. Dr. Ishmael also congratulated Antigua and Barbuda's Prime Minister, Hon. Baldwin Spencer on his victory at the recent general elections and Chief Minister of Montserrat, Hon. Dr. Lowell Lewis, on assuming the Chairmanship of the Authority for the first time.

Dr. Ishmael reminded the audience that the region was not immune to the global economic meltdown, with key sectors like tourism and construction feeling the impact. However, she noted that the current challenges presented opportunities for further effective and joint action in the region. The Director General pointed to the outward orientation of the OECS, and the building of new partnerships as the Organisation seeks to promote the region's interests in a changing geopolitical environment. She informed the audience that in recent times new relationships have been formed or are in the process of being formed at the regional level with Brazil, Venezuela, Austria, Turkey, Finland, Spain, Mexico, Cuba, France, the US Virgin Islands, the European Union, Puerto Rico and Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Ishmael also highlighted the heavy emphasis on excellence in the delivery of service that she observed on her recent South East Asia Mission and the valuable lessons this holds for the OECS Member States as service dominated economies, in the context of global competitiveness.

Host of the Meeting, Premier Hon. Ralph O'Neal lauded the OECS integration movement for its role in the BVI's development, pointing especially to the areas of disaster preparedness, joint pharmaceutical procurement, treatment of HIV/AIDS and education reform. Mr. O'Neal stated that the BVI's membership of the OECS has, at the same time, contributed in significant ways to the development of the region. He noted for example, the BVI's long experience in international commercial matters which provided the ideal setting for the establishment of the Commercial Court Division of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. That Division was formally established in Tortola on May 4th 2009.

The outgoing Chairman of the Authority, Prime Minister Hon. Tillman Thomas, commended the region's response to the international economic meltdown, pointing to the special January joint meeting of the OECS Authority and the Monetary Council, which agreed on short and longer term measures to mitigate the negative impact of the financial crisis on the banking and financial system and on key sectors of the economy in the OECS.

Prime Minister Thomas thanked the Prime Ministers of Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados Hon.



Patrick Manning and Hon. David Thompson respectively for their interventions to limit the fall out from the regional financial crisis occasioned by CFL (CLICO) in the OECS Member States. The Prime Minister expressed concern about the position adopted by the OECD and others in the G20 with respect to ‘tax havens’ and noted that the region must take necessary action to deal with that challenge. He also expressed concern about the challenge to the tourism sector as a result of the new long distance air travel tax being proposed by the United Kingdom.

Incoming Chairman, Hon. Dr. Lowell Lewis, stressed the importance of regional collaboration to tackle the global financial crisis, and reaffirmed the commitment of Montserrat, a British Overseas Territory, to deepening the integration process and maintaining full membership of the OECS.

He told the gathering that Montserrat has informed the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office of its commitment, and has received the authority to sign the Declaration of Intent with the other Heads of Government of the OECS on participation in the OECS Economic Union.

The Opening Ceremony also acknowledged the work of the three winning students of a schools radio contest in the BVI on OECS Integration – Tamara Ceasar, Shakeel Fonseca and Deandra Wisdom.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Implications of the Global and Regional Financial Crisis for OECS Economies

The Meeting received an update from the Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank on the challenges facing OECS economies from the global financial crisis. The report highlighted significant challenges ahead for Member States. The Governor advised that the major task facing the region is how to respond to these challenges. He noted that the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank Monetary Council has developed an eight-point plan to assist Member States, and that the coordination of the actions and responses at the regional level will continue to be pursued.

Sectoral Effects - Tourism

Heads of Government reviewed a report from the 8th OECS Council of Tourism Ministers meeting, which was held on April 21st 2009 in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and which had as its main focus, tracking progress on, and implementing the tourism-related mandates from the Special Joint Meeting of the OECS Authority and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank Monetary Council.



The Authority endorsed the recommendation by the Ministers to apply a levy on each airline ticket purchased for travel into the OECS, as part of a wider Caribbean initiative to set up a Caribbean Tourism Marketing Fund to be administered jointly by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, emphasizing the need for all OECS and CARICOM Member States to commit to implement the levy. The Meeting endorsed the Ministers' mandate to the OECS Secretariat to assist with drafting model legislation to facilitate introduction of the ticket levy.

The Authority confirmed the mandate to examine the implications of the proposal to establish an OECS Tourism Authority to coordinate and manage common action on tourism issues, including marketing, looking in particular at the structure and function of the proposed Authority.

The Meeting endorsed the mandate given by the Ministers to the OECS Secretariat to prepare an Economic Impact paper jointly with the ECCB and in collaboration with national tourism stakeholders, which would set out the critical issues for the Tourism Sector for national and regional consideration.

The Meeting further expressed concern at the stated intention of the Government of the United Kingdom to impose a carbon emission tax on airline passengers from that country destined for the region as of November 2009. It was noted that this has serious consequences for a tourism sector already affected by the economic downturn. It was agreed that continuing strong representation should be made to the United Kingdom government on this matter with a view to averting the negative outcomes of its introduction.

Sectoral Effects – Construction

The Authority received the report of a special meeting on the OECS construction sector held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in March 2009. That meeting had been requested by the Joint OECS Authority and ECCB Monetary Council Meeting which concluded that the construction sector had a vital role to play in the recovery effort and that creative strategies should be developed to ensure the continued growth of this sector.

The Meeting endorsed a number of short and medium term recommendations. Among them that Member States should:

- i. Examine the feasibility of establishing arrangements for joint procurement of sand cement, steel and high quality lumber, using the OECS PPS model as a platform.
- ii. Give focused attention to mobilizing development financing and offering fiscal incentives to spur investments in the expansion of low to middle income housing projects.



- iii. Through Community Colleges and other specialized institutions, expand and offer certified training in construction management and ancillary trades.
- iv. Establish an information portal on proposed and pipeline OECS and wider regional projects through the OECS E-Government for Regional Integration Project (EGRIP) in a bid to increase the transparency of opportunities for OECS construction companies to bid jointly on construction projects.
- v. Give focused attention over the medium term to the greater use of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) for the delivery of public services, in a bid to increase cost effectiveness of delivery, generate more private sector activity and free up public resources for redeployment in other priority service areas and, to that end, engage the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) as a partner in the development of a fiscally prudent approach to the use of PPPs in public expenditure programmes.

Social Safety Net Provisions in Response to Financial Crisis

The Authority received an update on progress made on the development of a situational analysis of social safety net programmes in the OECS Member States and a regional social safety net programme.

The Meeting endorsed recommendations made by the Secretariat to convene a meeting of all Development Partners at which the final report of the situational analysis will be presented and discussed, and a road map established to effectively utilize the financial and technical resources available for social safety net interventions in Member States.

Heads of Government agreed to the need to develop a comprehensive programme which will include:

- i. Provision of short term employment to last to the end of the current economic crisis.
- ii. Training for employment flexibility and trade adjustment
- iii. Harmonisation of National Insurance operations in Member States through gradual joining of the funds.
- iv. Youth at Risk Interventions
- v. Child Protection programmes, including early childhood education



- vi. Improved Information Management Systems
- vii. Promotion of self-employment and effective personal money management and budgeting
- viii. Strong focus on reemployment opportunities, housing, healthcare, food and nutrition security, and dealing with retired persons.
- ix. Member States making strong cases for international assistance through well prepared submissions, and
- x. Ensuring that social safety net programmes are integral parts of any structural adjustment programmes which Member States may have to enter.

FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION

Exchange of Views with the Governor of the USVI

Heads of Government welcomed the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands Mr. John P. de Jongh Jr. and engaged him in discussions on closer functional cooperation between the OECS and the USVI. Noting that the USVI and the OECS share similar challenges and similar areas of growth, the Governor expressed a strong interest in building a partnership between the two groups.

The Authority noted the areas proposed for cooperation in a draft Memorandum of Understanding and mandated the Secretariat to work with the Governor's Administration to finalise the document. Areas outlined for collaboration include:

- i. Tourism, with special focus on airlift and cruise ship activities
- ii. Historical preservation and archives
- iii. Sports
- iv. Educational opportunities, especially at the University of the Virgin Islands which already has a large OECS student body
- v. Cooperation in Emergency Management
- vi. Sharing Health facilities, in particular the USVI's new cardiac and cancer centres
- vii. Environment, with special focus on climate change and preserving coral reefs
- viii. Arts and culture
- ix. Trade
- x. Agriculture
- xi. Security, including closer collaboration among police services against cross border criminals



Exchange with the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the OECS

Heads of Government held discussions with Spain's Ambassador to the OECS H.E. Mr. Jesus Silva, on building closer ties with that European nation.

The Meeting welcomed the signing of a Declaration of Intent between the OECS and Spain in April 2009 to pursue joint cooperation programmes in areas of mutual interest. Among the areas identified are:

- i. Training in Diplomacy
- ii. Oceans Governance – including technical support in the areas of maritime boundary delimitation and fisheries/marine resources production and management
- iii. Legislative drafting – in support of the OECS Economic Union
- iv. The Economic Union Work Programme
- v. Environmental Management
- vi. Economic Development including the deepening of Regional Integration Initiatives, Implementation of the EPA, Micro-Enterprise and Private Sector Development, Agriculture and Agro-Industry Development, and Sustainable Tourism Development.

The Meeting further welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the OECS and the Spanish Diplomatic School in October 2008 through which Spain will assist with the training of OECS Foreign Service Officers, and help create a cadre of highly skilled professionals to meet the region's expanding representational and negotiating requirements. Spain has offered assistance to the OECS School of Diplomacy, which has been providing training for public officials in Member States.

The Meeting noted the offer of annual scholarships for a Masters in Diplomacy and International Relations at the Diplomatic School in Spain and that two OECS nationals from Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have become the first two candidates for enrollment in the programme. The Meeting also noted the offer to assist the OECS with a series of seminars to develop the best foreign service model for the region. Other seminars will also be convened for trade negotiations and integration matters.

Report on Results: the OECS MOU with Puerto Rico

The Authority noted progress to date on the OECS Collaboration Agreement signed in February 2009 with the University of Puerto Rico including the processing of the first batch of OECS nationals for admission to the 2009/10 academic year.



The programme allows OECS nationals to enroll at the University of Puerto Rico with the same status as Puerto Rican students and hence avoid paying the higher tuition, accommodation and other fees they would have paid as international students.

A Conceptual Framework for developing Foreign Service Skills in the OECS Economic Union

The Meeting noted the enhanced international profile of the organization resulting from its repositioning into one which is more ‘outward’ looking, and in the process actively engaged in pursuing its own strategic interests.

In that context the Authority noted the need for the organization to have a cadre of skilled foreign service personnel to represent the interest of the OECS at both national and regional levels.

The Authority endorsed the framework proposed by the Secretariat for developing the skill sets required in the OECS in a comprehensive way as it works to promote its strategic interests in a dynamic global environment. The Meeting noted the three pronged approach being pursued:

- i. Working towards more effective domestic/regional arrangements, such as the CSME and the OECS Economic Union
- ii. Addressing Strategic interest globally, and
- iii. Initiatives to restructure the Secretariat

The Meeting agreed on the need for greater coordination of foreign policy and noted that one of the Working Groups for the OECS Economic Union will address Foreign Affairs and International Relations. The Meeting further agreed on the need to undertake a comprehensive review to determine required skill sets, and to develop policy for the best model for foreign service in the OECS. The Meeting agreed that training should focus on developing career diplomats as well as provide training of existing officials in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Developing Linkages with other Countries and Regions

The Authority welcomed the efforts of the Secretariat in exploring linkages and interactions with other countries and regions on behalf of the OECS as a group. The Meeting noted the growing respect for the OECS internationally as reflected in the expanding number of countries seeking to establish contact and relationships. The Authority directed the Secretariat to continue its efforts in this regard, with special attention being paid to the mobilization of additional resources to support the develop efforts of the OECS and Economic Union transition. Special note was made of a recent mission to South East Asia, led by the Director General, to develop new partnerships in support of the OECS Economic Union.



Regional Security System

The Meeting reaffirmed the commitment of the OECS to the maintenance of the Regional Security Systems (RSS) and noted the importance of the RSS to the security of OECS Member States. The Meeting noted that there were other security coordination initiatives being developed in the wider CARICOM framework, and called for effective interaction and dialogue to ensure that there was no duplication within the region, but instead a seamless coordination and operational process to ensure that the need for proper security was addressed.

The Meeting agreed that there would be further discussion on this matter on the upcoming Special Meeting of CARICOM Heads in Port of Spain on Sunday 24th May.

Tax Havens

The Meeting examined actions to be taken in relation to the financial services sector, and made public their commitment to examine what further improvements may be required in tax and regulatory rules to provide greater transparency in accordance with agreed standards and procedures, and to work along with Barbados in this effort.

FINANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Secretariat Budget: Financial Year 2009/10

The Meeting received and approved the Budget of the Secretariat for the fiscal year 2009/2010. The measures taken by the Secretariat to contain costs were noted, and the Authority expressed its appreciation for these efforts by the Secretariat.

On the matter of ensuring actual provision of the resources required for the operations of the Secretariat, the Meeting noted ongoing financial difficulties being experienced by Member States, and the impact of this on the ready availability of financial resources. Notwithstanding this situation Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the provision of the needed funding for the Organisation, given the importance of the work being undertaken on behalf of the Member States, and also given the additional financial flows from donors and partner agencies, channeled to Member States through the Secretariat. Member States expressed their appreciation for the work of the organization and its leadership and noted the high regard accorded to the organization internationally

Proposal for Restructuring of Eastern Caribbean Liaison Office, Toronto



The Authority noted and applauded the accomplishments of the Eastern Caribbean Liaison Office in Canada, particularly the very successful Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme which has benefitted thousands of OECS nationals over the 30 years of its existence. At the current time 630 persons are exposed are engaged in that program in Canada.

The Authority further noted and approved recommendations to pursue possibilities for OECS Member States to also benefit from the Low Skilled Worker Programme which offers employment opportunities in construction, hospitality and home care among others. The Meeting noted that these areas match the service oriented focus of OECS economies, and will attract women and younger workers who are currently not drawn to the agricultural workers programme.

The Authority mandated the Secretariat to pursue the implementation of recommendations for greater impact of the programme, including seeking a wider remit and an enhanced structure for the Liaison Office, greater outreach, and the processing, selection, screening and preparation of workers.

Overseas Properties

i) OECS Office – Washington

The Authority noted the assessment of the physical condition of the OECS owned building housing several Missions in Washington undertaken by the Secretariat in collaboration with Ambassadors in Washington. The Authority instructed the Secretariat to work with the Washington-based embassies to identify a suitable building for purchase, to sell the current building on New Mexico Avenue, and to prepare an in-depth financial proposal for funding the purchasing of a new building.

ii) OECS Residence in Canada

The Authority endorsed a proposal for the Secretariat to undertake repairs to the OECS official residence. The Authority further directed the Secretariat to undertake the necessary measures to transfer ownership of the property, to all the contributing Member States to arrange for a professional evaluation of the property and report findings at the next meeting. The Authority also instructed the Secretariat to pursue its recognition as an international organization in Canada.

ECONOMIC UNION/REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Economic Union Work Programme and Status Report

The Authority approved the Work Programme for Economic Union presented by the Secretariat.



The programme focuses on key objectives of the Economic Union process including:

- i. Integration of the OECS Market
- ii. Development and Policy Harmonisation in key Economic Sectors
- iii. Support for Trade Development and Enhancement of Competiveness of OECS Economies
- iv. Support for Establishment of the Economic Union and the Wider OECS Integration process through development of cooperative approaches and common policies in cross cutting areas
- v. Effective operation of governance structures establishing the Treaty
- vi. Development of OECS Representational capacity
- vii. Public Education

The Authority noted the composition of the Working Groups set up to provide policy and technical support to the Organisation in the establishment of the Economic Union. The Groups cover the areas of:

- i. Justice, Law and Order
- ii. Foreign Affairs
- iii. Public Administration
- iv. Transition and Economic Consolidation
- v. Movement of People

The Authority urged Member States which have not yet done so to provide the Secretariat with the list of nominees to the Working Groups. The Authority also noted the support provided and initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat in respect of public awareness initiatives.

The Meeting urged Member States to enhance mechanisms for internal dialogue and communication in order to improve responsiveness and provide the required cooperation and assistance to the Secretariat.

The Authority approved the process leading up to the inauguration of the OECS Economic Union on June 18th 2010 which marks the commencement of the 30th anniversary of the OECS. This involves the finalization of the Treaty document and the national parliamentary processes for its approval by that date.

The Authority welcomed the recommendation from the CARICOM representative that the OECS Secretariat considers advancing some Economic Union activities through the work programme of the CARICOM Secretariat.

The Meeting welcomed the announcement by the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis that public



consultations on the Economic Union will be launched on June 23rd 2009.

Economic Union Public Awareness Programme – Launch of TV Series and Youth Website

The Authority approved the Public Education Programme developed by the Secretariat in respect of the Economic Union.

The Authority also approved the first episode of an animated TV series “U” and the Secretariat’s proposals regarding simultaneous prime time launch and subsequent dissemination of the film.

The Meeting noted the report on a Spokespersons Workshop to train Secretariat staff as spokespersons and trainers of spokespersons, to carry forward the regional public education agenda and support national sensitization and consultation efforts. Requests were made to extend this Workshop to other Member States.

Report on Implications for OECS Economic Union in the context of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

The Authority received and noted a consultant report commissioned by the Secretariat on the implications for the OECS Economic Union in the context of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

CSME Contingency Rights Issues

The Authority considered a report on an OECS position on the issue of Contingent Rights, and the implications for OECS Member States arising from the obligations of a Protocol on Contingent Rights.

The Meeting further noted that the MDCs have expressed reservations on General Rights and Rights to Social Services on the same terms and conditions as accorded to nationals of the host country.

Heads of Government agrees that OECS Member States should not present definitive conclusions at this time on the specifics of the Protocol on Contingent Rights within the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

Heads of Government further agreed that the OECS Member States should pursue the development of a Protocol on Contingent Rights in concert with how far the non-OECS CARICOM Members are prepared to go.

The Meeting also agreed that a Working Group should be established to address the scope and extent of these arrangements for the OECS in the context of the Economic Union Treaty.



REPORT FROM LEGAL UNIT

The Authority approved the draft Eastern Caribbean Competition Commission (ECCC) Agreement for signing, and approved and endorsed the Competition Bill for enactment in each Member State. The Bill seeks to ensure that the benefits expected from the establishment of the CSME are not frustrated by anti-competitive business conduct by enterprises operating in OECS Member States.

The Authority noted the work of the Secretariat in assisting Member States in:

- i. Implementing their international trade obligation, and
- ii. Taking full advantage of the opportunities under the stated trade arrangements and agreements

The Authority noted the report on work undertaken to facilitate the implementation of the OECS Family Law and Domestic Violence Reform Project, and the progress on the social services delivery component of the project.

The Meeting noted that the following draft model harmonization Bill and Regulations have been approved by the Legal Affairs Committee for adoption in Member States:

- i. Maintenance of Children Bill
- ii. Maintenance of Children Regulations

The Meeting further endorsed the need for the preparation of Draft Bills in the following areas:

- i. Marriage: to address the legal issues relating to property and inheritance rights of spouses in marriage
- ii. Divorce: to address legal issues relating to matrimonial property and financial provisions on marriage
- iii. Unions other than Marriage: to address legal issues relating to property and inheritance rights in unions other than marriage

The Authority endorsed the continuation of negotiations of the Extradition Treaty and the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty with the French Government, and approved the composition of the team negotiating on behalf of the OECS.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENT ISSUES



A Regional Approach to Energy Policy Formulation

The Authority received a project proposal for the establishment of an Eastern Caribbean Energy Regulatory Authority (ECERA), as a regional regulator for electricity sector stakeholders in the OECS. The Authority endorsed the proposal and instructed the Secretariat to continue engagement with the World Bank on the establishment of the regulatory body. ECERA is expected to enhance the efficiency of electricity provision in OECS Member States.

Report on Pharmaceutical Procurement Service

The Authority agreed to request Ministries of Health to submit applications for any medications that are currently being purchased outside of the PPS for consideration at the January 2010 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting.

Heads of Government noted the worsening debt situation of the PPS and its negative impact on the integrity of the pooled procurement system and agreed to ensure that Ministries of Finance liaise with the PPS to liquidate the debt in the shortest possible time.

The Meeting agreed to review the respective budgetary allocations for pharmaceuticals and medical supplies in order to satisfy an expanding formulary and increasing expenditure.

Heads of Government noted that the PPS has donated 20,000 Tamiflu tablets valued at \$100,000 to combat the potential pandemic that may be caused by the North American Flu (H1N1) virus.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

YEOSU Expo South Korea 2012

Heads of Government considered a report on Yeosu Expo 2012, scheduled to take place in the South Korean city of Yeosu from May to August, 2012, under the theme “The Living Ocean and Coast”. It was agreed that this event provided OECS Member States with a unique opportunity to draw the attention of the international community to the impacts of climate change, sea level rise, environmental pollution and marine resource depletion on small island developing states. Consequently, Heads mandated the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit of the Secretariat to liaise with Member State Ministries of the Environment and Departments of Fisheries



to coordinate joint OECS participation in Yeosu Expo 2012 and to mobilize support from the Korean Government for this participation.

Date and Venue for 50th Meeting

The Authority decided that the historic 50th Meeting of the OECS Authority will be held in November 2009 in Anguilla. This meeting will honour the achievements and contributions of Chief Minister, Hon. Osbourne Fleming for whom this will be his last meeting.

CONCLUSION

The OECS Heads considered the forty-ninth Meeting of the Authority to be a watershed in the historical evolution of the Organisation. They noted the enhanced international profile of the Organisation resulting from all of the efforts aimed at repositioning the OECS into one which was outward looking in pursuit of its strategic interests around the world. The Authority expressed their appreciation to the leadership and staff of the Organisation for their commitment and work done in support of the OECS developmental agenda.