



**CARIBBEAN
REGIONAL NEGOTIATING MACHINERY**

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STATEMENT FOR THE PRESS

RNM Assistance to the OECS in External Trade Negotiations

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**Statement by the Director-General of the Caribbean
Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM), Ambassador
Dr. Richard Bernal, on RNM Assistance in External
Trade Negotiations to OECS Member States**

RNM Assistance to the OECS

1. In pursuing the mandate given it by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Governments, to develop, coordinate and execute an overall negotiating strategy for various external trade related negotiations involving the region, the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM) remains cognizant of and informed by the special circumstances of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), as relates to the Caribbean's strategic external trade negotiating positions.

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2. The RNM has pursued a number of initiatives in relation to the OECS. They have taken place in the context of the following broad areas:
 - (a) advocacy of OECS views and interests in hemispheric and international fora;
 - (b) helping to build their internal negotiating capacity;
 - (c) facilitating their process of consultation and formulation of national positions;
 - (d) technical work to support negotiating positions;
 - (e) assisting private sector engagement in trade policy; and,
 - (f) trade information.

Advocacy of OECS Views and Interests

2.1 In external trade negotiations, given the reality of limited OECS participation, the RNM ensures that the views and interests of those Member States are articulated. The RNM places special emphasis on the small island developing states (SIDS), within the small economies category, to reflect the peculiar circumstances and needs of OECS countries.

Building Internal Negotiating Capacity

2.2 The RNM has undertaken programmes to enhance the negotiating capacity of OECS Member States. The programmes are threefold: i) training young professionals (since the commencement of this programme 6 of the 15 trainees have been from the OECS countries); ii) training OECS trade officials currently involved in the negotiating process; and, iii) the procurement of technical assistance.

Facilitating Consultation and Formulation of National Positions

2.3 The RNM contributes significantly to the advancement of OECS consultations, and the resulting formulation of desired negotiating strategies and positions. RNM-

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sponsored consultative meetings have enabled OECS participants to enhance their technical understanding of complex negotiating issues. Allied to this, the RNM has an on-going working relationship with the OECS Secretariat. RNM staff routinely participate in trade related activities organized by the Secretariat.

Technical Work to Support Negotiating Positions

2.4 The OECS has benefited, in a significant way, from several technical studies, papers and strategic analyses prepared by the RNM, in partnership with other agencies.

Assisting Private Sector Engagement in Trade Policy

2.5 The RNM has appointed a Private Sector Advisor and Private Sector Liaison to improve the level of private sector involvement in national decision-making on external trade matters. More recently, the RNM has spearheaded an initiative with the Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund that would provide for even greater engagement of the private sector.

Trade Information

2.6 The RNM has given special emphasis to increasing relevant information on aspects of the negotiating agenda confronting OECS countries. RNM communications and web-based information reflect OECS views and interests.

Enhanced Support for the OECS Secretariat

3. The RNM remains committed to building on the foundation it has established in advancing the special needs and interests of the OECS sub-region. To this end, a new OECS Technical Advisor recently joined the RNM, to serve as an interlocutor between the RNM and OECS. In the near future, the RNM will also be assigning an agricultural specialist to exclusively work on OECS matters.

The RNM's Commitment to the OECS

4. The RNM's contribution to the trade negotiating effort of the OECS sub-region has been very significant. The Chairman of the CARICOM Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee with responsibility for external negotiations has endorsed this view.

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