

REMARKS - THE OPENING CEREMONY
ECCB/OECS UNDER-23 NETBALL TOURNAMENT
NEVIS – 2 JULY 2 2009

Presented by

Mr Laurie Lawrence, Permanent Secretary, Nevis Island Administration
on behalf of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank

I am happy to be able to represent the ECCB on this very auspicious occasion. The ECCB has been the backbone of the financial system of the OECS for many years and has a reputation for excellence in everything that it does. The fact that the ECCB has partnered with the OECS Secretariat since 2001 as sponsor for the OECS Under-23 Netball Tournament, demonstrates beyond any doubt that this tournament is extremely important to the regional integration initiative and in inculcating discipline and positive attitudes in our young people, values that will empower them to play an active role in the socio-economic development of the OECS.

The economic development of the member territories and their citizens is an important component of the mandate of the Bank and thus it is extremely important that our young people are at the forefront of the development thrust if our actions are to bear fruits.

Cognisant of its developmental role, the ECCB not only provides funds to facilitate the hosting of such an important tournament, but also ensures that an ECCB officer engages the players in discussions on issues affecting their communities and region. We consider this interaction very useful because sustainable development cannot be achieved without the full participation of the grass root level and the various communities. We are therefore challenging all of the young people present here this evening to become agents of change and to make a difference in the development of their communities, country and region.

In many ways this tournament embodies the ideals, values and skills by which the ECCB operates, values which have continued to ensure a stable dollar and financial sector. These include - *the pursuit of excellence, determination in the face of challenges, an unwavering*

resolve to succeed, discipline, versatility to adapt, and dedication and strength to go the extra mile.

These values have ensured the success and longevity of the ECCB and if pursued by the OECS Under-23 teams will ensure the continued success of this very important tournament. In addition, the ECCB and the EC currency have served as unifying forces in the push towards regional integration. The Under 23 Netball Tournament provides the ideal platform for young people from the OECS to form new relationships and exchange ideas, key steps in the realisation of OECS integration. The work of the ECCB and the work of the OECS Under-23 Netball Tournament therefore share a common understanding, responsibility and commitment.

We are therefore hopeful that the tournament will be extremely competitive but in an environment of love and mutual respect. Let us form bonds of friendship so that the young people of the OECS could become a beacon of hope for a more integrated and prosperous OECS. In the words of Bronston Alcott,

**“We, like parted drops of rain,
Swelling till they meet and run,
Shall be all absorbed again,
Melting, flowing into one.”**

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Management and Staff of the ECCB, I wish to congratulate the OECS Sports Desk, the visiting teams and our host Netball Association.

As we prepare to start this regional competition, enjoy the games and embrace the qualities that sports have nurtured in you - team work, discipline, and mental and physical alertness.
And remember no challenge is too difficult to overcome while you put your mind to it.

May the best team win.